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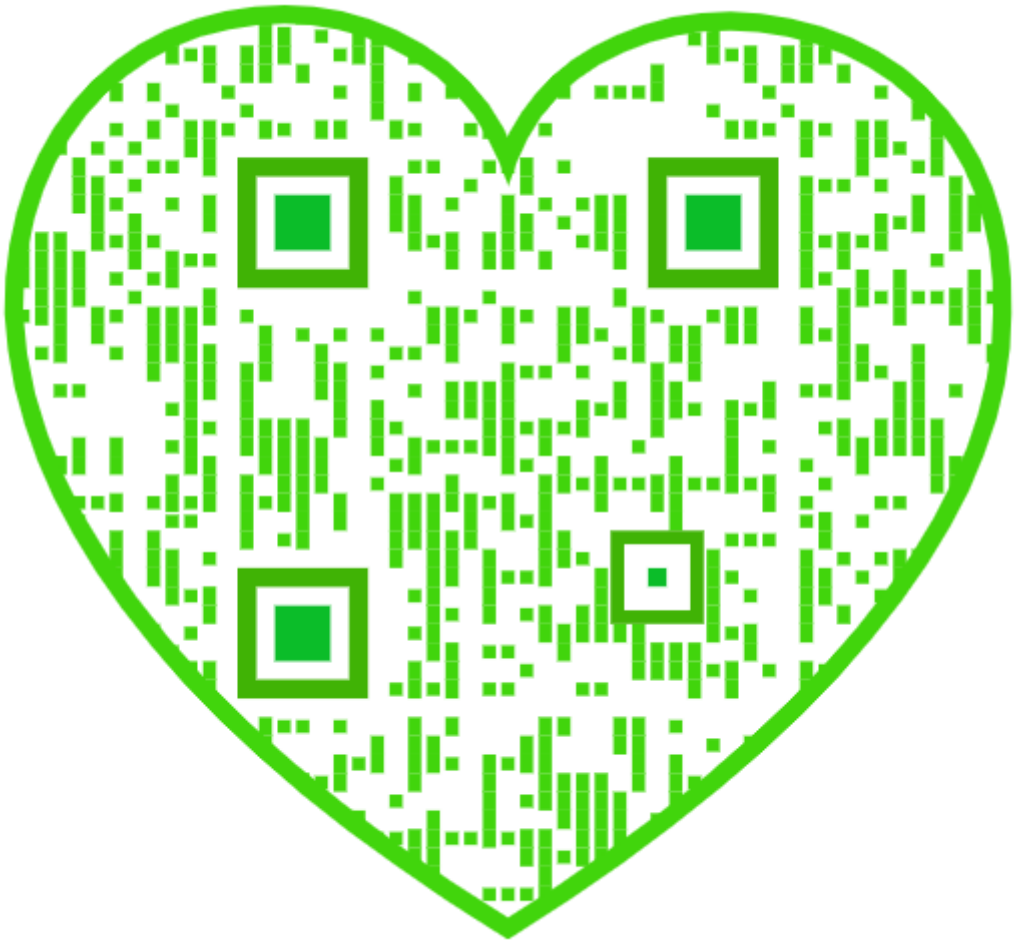
ORMAL STUDIES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

PRIMER OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

R. A. REDFORD, M.A., LL.B.



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NORMAL STUDIES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

PRIMER

OF

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

BY

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PRIMER

OF

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE describes the arguments which are employed in support of Christianity. It should be clearly understood, that, when Christians undertake to meet those who doubt, or resist, the claims which are made on behalf of Christianity, they do not assume that they can remove *every* difficulty which may be suggested; as that would be an assumption beyond the true modesty of those who remember the *limitations of human faculties* and *the nature of the subject.* Neither do they ignore the fact that opposition to the claims of religious truth may proceed from a state of mind which is itself the result of *moral* causes, and therefore to be chiefly removed by *moral* and *spiritual* means. But they address arguments to *unbelievers*, *i.e.* to those who demand them; as meeting them on their own ground. And they supply *believers* with the reasons which support their faith; that they may both believe more firmly, and resist the influence of objectors, whose words are sometimes artfully prepared to shake confidence, even where they cannot overthrow established positions. Particular and fragmentary objections to Christianity are common. A general assault upon the whole Christian

system is rare. We are best prepared against the kind of opposition which is now prevalent by a careful and systematic review of the whole circle of Christian evidence.

Arguments in support of Christianity presuppose that we are able to state *what Christianity is*, and what is the claim which it makes upon the human mind. There is much included in the faith of Christians which is not peculiar to Christianity; such as the personal existence of God; the responsibility of Man to God; the existence of the soul after death; the reality of a future state of rewards and punishments. It is an unfair demand to make of the Christian that he should be required to prove the truth of *all* that lies at the foundation of Religion. Some of the *primary religious beliefs* cannot be demonstrated, any more than the *primary moral beliefs* or the *primary scientific beliefs*. But Christianity has grouped together a number of truths which hold such a relation to one another (as they are presented in the Christian system) that they form a *unity*, which claims to be received as of *Divine authority*, as a revelation *superseding* all that came before it, and demanding *universal acceptance*. It is not enough to argue in support of particular truths which are included in Christianity. Nor is it our aim in this primer, to take the Christianity of *one period* or *portion of Christendom*, as representative, exclusively, of *what Christianity is*. It cannot be denied that *some* of the truth which is in Christianity is to be found elsewhere; nor need it be denied that, during the Christian history, that which cannot be supported *has* been regarded by Christians as true. The argument concerns nothing but *Christianity itself* and its *true claims*. We must, then, understand,

What Christianity is.

The distinction must be made between *true Christianity* and (i.) Christianity as it became corrupted into *Ecclesi-*

astical Christianity; such *e.g.* as the Christianity we find in the writings of *Church fathers*, or in the *Roman Catholic hierarchy*, or in the *dogmatic theologians* of the post-Reformation times. (ii.) *Defective Christianity*, such as may be seen exemplified in the Unitarian system, or any other which omits from its doctrine that which belongs to the *vital substance of the Christian religion.*

Several points must be recognized, such as these:—

1. Christianity took its rise as a distinct religion *at a particular time.*

2. While it embraced much that was already taught, still it was *not a mere development* either out of Judaism or out of Paganism.

3. It existed as a spiritual force and practical life in the world before the *systematic teaching* of it commenced.

4. As the name implies, it was a religion which *proceeded from a person*, and which was, as a whole, *a personal product.*

Christianity is the Religion of Jesus Christ.

History proves that He lived in Palestine. The existence of Christians can be traced to within a few years of the date of His death. [See page 17 on the Credentials of Christianity.] It is essential to Christianity that Jesus Christ, in Whom it commenced, was *absolutely unique in person, character, and history. In person:* He was at the same time one of the human family and above all the rest of men in every moral and spiritual attribute, sinless, absolutely free from error, possessed of Divine knowledge; *In character:* a spotless example of all those virtues which lift up and ennoble human life and make it happy—truthfulness, purity, love, self-sacrifice, humility, patience; *In history:* an entire exception to the universal record of the past, manifesting Omnipotent power and irresistible

force of will, yet "despised and rejected of men," "suffering contradiction of sinners against Himself," cut off at three and thirty years of age by a cruel and shameful public execution, in which representatives of both the Jewish and heathen worlds took part.

It is part of the teaching of Christianity that Jesus Christ came into a place and ministry which were prepared for Him by God in the course of many centuries, in one land, and among a people whose history is unique among the peoples of the world. *Messiahship*, as the Old Testament sets it forth, includes the ideas of a *Divine Prophet*, a *Divine Priest*, and a *Divine King;* of one, *i.e.*, in whom God would supremely *reveal His mind and will*, *reconcile the world unto Himself*, notwithstanding its sinfulness, and *reconstitute human society* on a perfect model, which should contain within it perpetual *righteousness*, *peace*, and *joy*. Such an ideal was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

After the death of Jesus, though nothing was written by Him, there was left behind Him the *remembrance* of His *history*, His *character* and His *teachings*, which were preserved by a *small body of followers*, most of whom were actually His companions during His ministry, and one of whom, the apostle Paul, was specially prepared to take up the work of teaching, and was, immediately on his conversion, received by the Christians among whom he went as a true disciple.

The *personal authority of Jesus Christ* was the sole ground of the authority of his apostles and disciples. They taught nothing but what they believed to be His teaching. They commenced the Christian Church and Christianity as a practical system, as representatives and members of Jesus Christ. He was their Head, their ruling authority, their sustaining power. While, therefore, we are dependent upon their accounts of their Master, and their representation of His doctrine, they became a mutual guarantee of sincerity and trustworthiness. The facts

warranting the Truths, and the Truths warranting the facts. Gospels and Epistles confirming one another.

This *secondary character of the Christian writings* is quite consistent with the claim which Christianity makes to be the religion of Christ, for while there must necessarily be somewhat of the medium mixing with the facts and truths themselves, it is not to their injury or obscuring, but rather for the better and fuller setting forth of the reality; for we thus obtain a *fourfold representation* of Christ and Christianity, not contradictory but *complementary*. The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—giving us the four sides of the structure of facts and words, and the writings of St. James, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John, reflecting the different aspects of Christian faith and character, corresponding in some degree to the different but harmonious views of the Saviour's life and doctrine.

It is necessary also to notice the "*lifting up*" of Christ by the crucifixion that He might "*draw all men unto Him.*" The Christianity which does not include the death and resurrection of Jesus as its main feature, cannot be universal, and remains within the narrow limits of Judaism. The Religion of Christ must be the religion of *the crucified and risen Redeemer.*

Christianity is the Religion of the Bible.

The word *Bible* properly means *a collection of small books.* The two volumes of the Old and New Testaments comprise writings extending over fifteen hundred years, possibly going back to a remote antiquity. While the New Testament has proceeded directly from the Christian Church, the Old Testament was, for more than a generation after the death of Jesus Christ, used by Christians, in their services and worship generally, as their *Bible.* It was the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament,

which was mostly read by the first disciples of Christ. While they were accustomed to the words of the Jewish Scriptures, they did not follow Jewish traditions or Jewish interpretations. Christianity is not responsible for all that was believed among the Jews.

It is a *necessary* instrument of a religion that it should be *embodied in writings* which could be handed down from age to age. But it is not necessary to the authority of such writings that they should be regarded as *the only documents* in which Divine Truth is taught, or that there is *nothing in them* which may not be superseded in course of time.

The true conception of a *Divine Revelation* is that of a *progressive communication of Truth.* It is possible, therefore, that, as book followed book, through fifteen hundred years, up to the time of Christ, while the light increased, old things passed away. *Revelation* does not mean a *disclosure of all the secrets of God*, but a *special and authoritative teaching, through human instruments, under Divine guidance, with an end in view, in which all the progressive steps shall be perfected in one personal Manifestation.* While, therefore, Christianity rests upon the whole Bible, it must be tried by the books of *the New Testament* more than by those of *the Old.* The *substance* of Judaism, in so far as it is found in the Jewish Scriptures, was carried forward into Christianity. Some of the *merely formal elements*, which surrounded the Lord Jesus Christ in His ministry, were not adopted by Him, but left behind Him in *the old dispensation.*

The distinctly *Christian documents* may be viewed in *three aspects*:—

1. As *historical*, setting forth *the facts* on which Christianity is founded.

2. As *doctrinal*, proclaiming *the constituents of a creed* which, though not formally drawn up in the New Testament, is implied throughout; the creed of *the early Chris-*

tians, concerning *God*, *Jesus Christ*, *the Holy Spirit*, *Sin*, *Forgiveness*, *Judgment*, and the *Future State*.

3. As *practical*, laying down, either by precept or by description of Christian character and life, the *rule* or *law of obedience to Christ*, as the Head and King of His people, and the rightful Ruler of the world.

The books of the New Testament should be read as *the authoritative standards* on these three subjects. Whatever use is made of other and later books, such as the writings of early fathers, and ecclesiastical writings generally, they must not be regarded as superseding, in any sense, the New Testament; nor is it safe to decide points of history, doctrine, or practice, by the standard of what was written *subsequent to the time of the apostles*.

Christianity is the Religion of the Christian Church.

By "*the Christian Church*" is meant the *congregation or society* of those who are *separated from others* as a religious community, *on the ground of their faith in Jesus Christ, and in order to fulfil His commandments*. There has never been a time, since that of the apostles, when there was not, somewhere in the world, such a society, however the number of Christians has varied, and whatever their state. While corruption crept in among those who were called Christians, it must be remembered that the Church itself was not responsible for those corruptions *at its first commencement*. The Christianity which came immediately from Christ, and which was expressed in the first Christian communities, was the Christianity which is embodied in the writings of the New Testament. We can easily trace the sources of those corruptions which subsequently flowed into the Church. They were partly due to the ignorance and defective characters of converts from heathenism, and partly to the want of faith in Christians themselves, lead-

ing them to employ means and agencies which compromised their Christian spirit. At the same time it should be borne in mind that, whatever was added to genuine Christianity, whatever was taken from it, whatever perversions of the truth were suffered, the *standard of reference remained uninjured*, viz. the *Christian Scriptures, the character and practice of the primitive Church of the apostles.*

All true reformations and revivals of practical religion during the course of Christian history have been brought about by the influence of truths which were testified *in the earliest Christian Churches.* The *word preached* has been as nearly as possible *the word of the Scriptures.* The *life enjoined* has been the life which follows as closely as possible *the example of Jesus Christ.* The *changes made* have been with a view to recall *primitive simplicity and purity of faith and practice.*

There is a great movement of Christians in modern times, in the spread of Christianity among the populations of the world, both where Christ is named, and where other religions have prevailed; the *motive power* of such efforts is not derived from *spurious additions* to the Truth, but from the quickened *faith in Christ Himself.*

Admitting the imperfections and faults which have attached to all Christian Churches, without exception, especially since the apostles were removed, still it cannot be denied that communities of Christians have leavened very much of the world with influences, which have in the long run worked for good; that the progress of Europe and America, and the hopeful aspect of other quarters of the world, are due chiefly to Christianity.

It is not possible for the spirit of denial or doubt to hold together communities of active well-doers. That the Christian Church should have maintained its agency, through so many centuries, is owing to the *positive spiritual life* that has been continued in it. And that the truth

should be clearing itself of accumulated errors is an evidence of its *vitality* and *authority*. At last Christianity will be seen clearly and fully in the Church.

Christianity is the Religion of the Christian Man.

It is quite possible to separate in thought that which any professed Christian derives *from Christ* from that which is due to his own *weakness* and *imperfect realization of Christianity*. We ought not to charge upon the religion professed the inconsistency and faultiness of the professor. Moreover, there is no claim made by Christianity which is *falsified* by the facts of men's characters and lives. If Jesus Christ had called only the righteous to Him, then He might be said to have failed, but the work which He undertakes and finishes is not to be judged of by what we see in *this world alone*. The character which falls short here is made complete hereafter. Some few facts with regard to the Christian man help us to see *the distinctive nature and supreme value of Christianity*.

There is no limit to the Christian ideal of humanity. Other religions, such as Paganism, Mahommedanism, Judaism, set before the individual man no such *example* as Jesus Christ, no such *moral teaching* as is found in the New Testament, and no such *motives* to live a new life as Christianity supplies. There is nothing which properly belongs to practical Christianity which represses the *pure humanity of man*. Tried by the test of actual life and history, the more Christian we are, the stronger and happier our personal manhood, and the healthier and more beneficent our influence on the world around us. There is an adaptation, in the Christian standard, to all varieties of men, to all countries and conditions of the social state. And it must be admitted, the personal exemplification of the standard, in Christ, sets it unmistakably before all as that which all can apply.

The Christian man is what he is, as a Christian, because he believes in Christ. He is not to be judged by the standard of *conventional morality*, nor of the *conscience alone.* His faith becomes a *moral power* within him, leading him to live a new life, impelling him to follow Christ, and thus setting before him the perfect standard of the New Testament. His character, therefore, is ceaselessly *progressive.* Moreover, it is by the *Christian society* that the Christian man is *nurtured and guided.* The influence of Christianity is elevating to *humanity as a whole.* It tends to purify, as well as maintain, society generally. It points to a *future*, in which the kingdom of Christ shall be universal; and from that kingdom shall be cast out all that defiles and degrades the nature of man. The ideal shall be reached.

HOW CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN AND IS OPPOSED.

To understand *the attacks made* upon a religion is to learn how it is related to different systems, beliefs, philosophies, tendencies of thought, individual characters. Thus the study of *the defence of Christianity* is a valuable help to the Christian, both in meeting unbelief and in confirming faith.

Opposition to Christianity has proceeded from *the State* on political grounds; from *rival religions*, chiefly under the influence of fear and by the instigation of priestcraft; or from *the thinking men*, such as philosophers, who, being ignorant of what Christianity taught, or unable to reconcile it with their systems, scorned it as foolishness. *Jews* hated the name of Jesus, because their views of the Old Testament were condemned by the Gospel, and their national pride was offended.

Early defences of Christianity corrected *misrepresentations* of Christian character and aims, and sought to connect together the Old and New Testaments. But there was no *formal written attack* upon Christian teaching and documents until about A.D. 180, when probably *Celsus*, a philosopher, published a work with the title "A True Discourse," an elaborate assault, first upon the *New Testament* as irreconcilable with the Old, next, upon *the Christian life*, as morally and politically blameworthy; and then, upon the statements of the *evangelists* and the claims of *Jesus Christ*, *miracles* and *Christian doctrines*. This work was fully answered by the Greek father, *Origen*, in

the book "Against Celsus," written about A.D. 250. Another antagonist was *Porphyry* (A.D. 233–305), of the New Platonic school, in Alexandria, more acute and subtle than Celsus, arguing against *the authenticity of Scripture books*, the *philosophical validity* of Christian doctrines, and the *consistency* of the apostles. His writings have all perished, though we have quotations from them in Christian fathers. In A.D. 303, *Hierocles*, president of Bithynia, and afterwards prefect of Alexandria, attempted to plead the cause of *declining heathenism* (as Julian the Apostate subsequently did, as emperor) by calling attention to *Apollonius of Tyana*, as *a rival of Jesus Christ*, in teaching and working of miracles. After *the conversion of the Emperor Constantine* (A.D. 312), from the fourth century, opposition to Christianity was rare and feeble. *Augustine* shows us, in his "City of God," that there was much *error* and *doubt* still in the world, but *opposition died away.*

For many centuries, during the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church, *speculative unbelief* was suppressed, or took the form of *heretical doctrine.* But, in the Middle Ages, the discussions of *the schoolmen* prepared the way for intellectual doubt. *Questions* were asked which could not be answered. But whatever unbelieving tendencies were existing they were *little expressed*, though secretly propagated. The attempt, upon the part of philosophical minds, to secure a *rational foundation* for their creed, was the result of the *intellectual awakening* which marked the *fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.* The conflicts which arose between the modern intelligence and the spirit of mediævalism in the Romish Church, produced, in many, an antagonism to *Christianity itself.* The *study of Scripture* promoted *criticism.* Investigation and inquiry, while restlessly alive, had not always the opportunity or means of satisfaction. *Philosophy* was in its infancy; *Biblical study* was immature. The result was, much of *crude theology* and the spread of *unbelief.*

English Deists commenced to write in the seventeenth century, with *Lord Herbert* of Cherbury (1581–1648), who was followed by *Hobbes* (1588–1679), *Blount* (1654–1693), *Toland* (1669–1722), *Shaftesbury* (1671–1713), *Collins*, (1676–1729), *Woolston* (1669–1733), *Tindal* (1657–1733), *Morgan* (died, 1743), *Chubb* (1679–1747). Admitting what was called *natural religion*, they denied the *truth of miracles*, the *specific doctrines of Christianity*, and the *canonical authority of the Scriptures*. Their object was to meet the demands of the philosophical mind of the age, and to *reduce Christianity to morality*. Their opposition can be best understood by a study of Butler's great work, "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature," published in reply to the deist Tindal, in 1736. The *eighteenth century* developed the unbelief of the seventeenth; particularly in the forms of *materialism and rationalism*. France and Germany, as well as England, were pervaded by the *sceptical spirit*. The names of *Bolingbroke*, *Hume*, *Gibbon*, *Thomas Paine*, *Bayle*, *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, may be mentioned; and *German rationalism*, commencing in *Semler* and culminating in *D. F. Strauss*, of Tübingen, whose "Life of Jesus" produced a very great effect on the Continent generally. There was a terrible outburst of infidelity in *the French Revolution*, which may be said to have relieved the intellectual atmosphere, like a discharge of electricity. The unbelief which characterized the commencement of the present century was much milder in expression, and gradually passed away, so far as it was in the form of *direct attack* upon Christianity. It has been followed, however, by *a scepticism*, which, while tempered by a more candid and reasonable spirit, is perhaps more *deep-seated and determined*. There have been English writers, in the first half of the century, who have retailed for their own public the rationalism of Germany, such as *Mackay*, *Greg*, *F. W. Newman*, *Colenso*, and others;

but the special feature of the middle of the present century has been the rise of *philosophical sceptics*, like Mr. *John Stuart Mill*, Mr. *George Henry Lewes*, Mr. *Herbert Spencer*, in our own country, and *Auguste Comte*, *Baur*, *Strauss*, and *Renan*, in France and Germany, whose assaults, both upon *fundamental truths of religion* and upon *the authority of the Scriptures*, have been accompanied by a profound *thought* and acute and comprehensive *criticism*, quite unknown among unbelievers before their time. The *scientific speculations* of modern times have greatly influenced the *tone of mind* with which Christianity has been studied; especially as apparently rendering *the accounts of miracles* less credible, indeed to some incredible.

At the present time unbelief assumes many different forms. The most prominent of these may be described briefly thus:—

1. *The scientific sceptics.* Much in Christianity would be left unopposed by this class, so long as they are not required to *accept miracles.* A theory of the physical universe is held which is *supposed* to involve the rejection of Christianity. But the opposition to Christian Truth is *not direct*, rather indifference and contempt, with the notion that *religion must give way to science.*

2. *The positivist philosophers*, who maintain as one of their dogmas that the religious state of mind is an *earlier stage* in the *progressive development* of thought, and that it is to be regarded as *superseded by positive science.* The theory of *evolution* is adopted by these speculators; and that being taken as established (which it certainly is not), is regarded as a *distinct contradiction* of the positions of Christianity.

3. *The rationalistic critics.* While there are many who oppose the Divine authority of the Bible, regarding it as inspired only in the same sense in which works of human genius are inspired, many more criticize the received views of Scripture with the utmost freedom, and

reject the traditions of the Christian Church as to the *authorship and dates* of the several books, particularly as to the genuineness and antiquity of *the books of Moses, the fourth Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles*, and all the epistles of St. Paul except *Romans*, 1 *and* 2 *Corinthians, and Galatians.*

Generally speaking, however, the criticism is not based so much upon the *matter* of the book, but upon *details of language;* and upon the critic's own theory as to the *use of words.* The main attack upon the New Testament has proceeded from the school of *Tübingen in Germany.* It has been met with the greatest decision and learning by the defenders of the Christian position. Notwithstanding the renewal of exploded objections, and attempts to reinforce worn-out theories, the influence of this hypercritical school is diminishing rapidly.

4. *The secularists.* These are found chiefly among the working classes and the less educated. Their leaders are not mere *sceptics*, but frequently *angry opponents* of Christ and Christians. They occupy themselves much in setting forth *difficulties and contradictions* in the teachings of the Bible, *inconsistencies* in Christians, and the supposed irreconcileability of Christianity with *social progress*, particularly with the *elevation of the lower classes* and the realization of *socialistic schemes.* Some of them claim a *high moral tone* in their motives and aims. Others are, only too evidently, bitterly opposed to the *lofty moral teachings of Christianity.* But the one common feature of all alike is their bold denial of *a future state;* or, at least, that man is required to *prepare for such a state.* Assuming that knowledge is only of what is *observed by the senses*, and that all beyond is *unknowable*, and therefore of *no present interest*, they inculcate a *materialistic method of life*, and profess entire confidence in the *sufficiency of human science*, as it advances, to *meet all the wants* of men and to *renovate the world.*

But there are many who could scarcely be classed under any of these heads. They do not oppose Christianity in the sense of *denying* that it is a true religion, and that it is working beneficially in the history of Man, but they treat it as open on every side to *free criticism;* they doubt some of its *acknowledged positions;* they profess themselves willing to maintain its forms and worship, only on condition of accepting *as much as pleases them* of its creed; they would fain have, placed side by side with it, and as deserving of a reverence almost as great, the *intellectual acquirements* and pursuits of the cultivated and scientific classes and the *enthusiastic sentiments* which attend upon Art. Such an attitude is keeping numbers from an *examination of Christian Evidence*, which would convince them that those who refuse to identify themselves with Jesus Christ are really against Him. "*He that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad.*"

WHAT THE CREDENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY ARE.

Dr. Johnson defines "*credential*" "*that which gives a title to credit; the warrant upon which belief or authority is claimed.*" There are many such credentials of Christianity according as it is regarded under any of the four different aspects just described. As *the religion of Jesus Christ*, the credentials will be those which can be traced to the person of Jesus Christ, as being manifestly from God. As *the religion of the Bible*, the credentials will be those which are presented in the sacred writings, their claim to be received as of Divine authority, their substantial integrity as handed down to us, their substantial truthfulness as testifying to facts and doctrines, their unique superiority as a record of the Word given by the Spirit of God through many ages and especially in the first beginnings of Christianity. As *the religion of the Christian Church*, the credentials must be sought in the pages of history; the examination of the remains of early Christian writings enabling us to trace the evidence of an *unbroken chain of belief* in the main points of the Christian creed and in the supreme authority of Christ and His apostles. As *the religion of the Christian man*, the credentials are wide and varied as humanity itself. They come from the depth of the heart, from the records of Christian missions, from the testimonies of the leading minds of the world since Christianity came into it, from the proved adaptation of the Christian religion to fulfil its aim which is universal dominion over the nature and life of Man.

The Credentials of Christianity as the Religion of Jesus Christ.

1. *The character of Jesus Christ* portrayed in the Gospels is a moral miracle. There are only three possible accounts to be given of it: (i.) that it was a *pure invention* of the men who wrote the Gospels; (ii.) that it was an *idealized portrait*, the original being much less wonderful; (iii.) that the evangelists simply *record the facts*. No one has ever seriously maintained that the Gospels are *fictitious*. It would be to credit the writers with a power they evidently had not, and would necessitate either collusion, or independent dishonest action, both of which would be inconsistent with their *moral character*. An *idealized portrait*, if either gradually formed or the work of individuals, would certainly be very different from the Gospels *in structure*. It would be more *complete* and *finished*, and would not be so remarkably *free from personal bias* of the writer's own mind. There is nothing, either in the matter or in the form, of the Gospel narrative, to suggest *manipulation*: that is, the writers did not mould the facts and sayings of Christ *according to their own ideas*, but simply recorded them. While there may be some evidence of intentional *selection* of matter, and special aim, in the *order* and *arrangement*, still there is no evidence of distinct intellectual plan, nor of co-operation to produce harmony and consistency. Each evangelist sets down that which serves his purpose, in many instances no doubt using *the same original record*, either written or oral, to some degree influenced by his own standpoint, but not, either by himself or with others, aiming at producing an *ideal* portrait, only at a *practical end*, which is expressed by the Apostle Peter (2 Pet. i. 15), that others "*after their decease may be able to have these things always in remembrance.*"

There remains, then, only the third account possible.

The original from which the portrait is drawn is accurately represented in it: then, such a portrait is a *credential* of Christianity—for it sets before us One, who cannot be regarded as either an *ordinary Man*, or merely, an *extraordinary Man*, but who must have been, what He claimed to be, and what Christianity announces, "*Son of God.*"

The *chief points* of the character of Jesus Christ in which we see His claims supported are these: (i.) He grew up in the midst of the common world *without the ordinary imperfections* of men; from a child He was *spotlessly pure*, while still *truly human*, in disposition and mode of life; (ii.) He was not only free from the faults of a Jewish education, but became an *entire exception to the Jewish character;* (iii.) though from the time of His public ministry exposed to hatred and opposition, He was *charged with nothing* inconsistent with His claims, viewed morally; (iv.) He was surrounded by *a body of disciples*, who themselves became examples of heroic self-sacrifice and holy life, and they always regarded Him as sustaining the claims He put forth to their reverence and obedience; (v.) from beginning to end of His ministry, and through persecution, and the cruel death of crucifixion, He was a *perfect example of benevolence, humility, and patience*, united with *omnipotent power*, *superhuman wisdom*, and *perfect consciousness of His own greatness;* (vi.) the testimonies of many of the profoundest students of history and of human character, may be adduced to the unsurpassable glory of Christ's character. Among others those of J. J. Rousseau, Napoleon the Great, the poet Goethe, the philosopher J. S. Mill, Mr. Lecky, the historian of morality. (vii.) Apart from the question of Christian faith, it must be admitted, the character of Jesus has immensely *influenced the world*, nor can any other be really compared with it.

2. *The teachings of Jesus Christ* are a moral miracle. We may study the words of Christ, either as they came

from Him as a Galilean teacher, or as they stand in a body in the Gospels, capable of being set side by side with any other body of words. It is impossible to account for them simply by reference to the Old Testament; for they were not only *original in form*, but, often, much higher *in spiritual import*, than anything to be found in the Law, the Psalms or the prophets. They were altogether different from *the current teaching of Jewish rabbis and heathen philosophers*. Then, as compared with the words of others, notice their *simplicity*, their *moral breadth and perfection*, their *adaptation to all times and places*, their *superiority* to the weaknesses of human nature, and yet their power over men; their inculcation of a life which is so *different from the world's standard*, and yet which is so fitted to bless and save the world; their *mission to the poor and afflicted*. Philosophy has utterly failed to do, what the words of Jesus Christ have done, *produce a great moral change* in the world. Philosophy preached to the *few;* Christ preached to the *many*. Philosophy *sold* its teachings for money; Christ blesses all, "*without money and without price*." Moreover, the words of Christ are based upon a *claim of Divine knowledge* which they fully sustain. They are the words of One who came out of "*the bosom of the Father*," and who could read the secrets of eternity. Many of Christ's sayings are too great and solemn to be uttered by any one, sincerely, who was himself a sinful man, like others. He "spake that which He knew, and He testified that which He had seen."

3. *Jesus Christ as a worker of miracles*, stood above all others.

Whether miracles have ever been performed or not, is a question which the Christian need not undertake to prove. No one, of any position, denies their *possibility*. All who admit that Jesus Christ was a *moral* miracle, will not hesitate to accept the narratives which describe

physical miracles. The miraculous facts are so *intermingled with the Gospel history* that it is impossible to dispense with them. It is agreed on all hands that *the first three Gospels* were published little more than a generation after the death of Christ; had they been capable of refutation, enemies of Christianity would have refuted them. The miracles were so many that Jesus Christ would be *publicly known as a miracle-worker.* Had He wrought *no* miracle, such a claim *could* not have been put forth for Him: and if He wrought *one*, He could work *all.* Had the accounts been *invented*, they would have been very different, in character and style, as we can see by comparing *the spurious Gospels* with the Gospels of the New Testament.

The miracles, if admitted to be real, place beyond doubt *the claims of Jesus Christ;* for (i.) they testify to *the presence of Divine power, co-operating with His teaching.* The nature of the miracles forbids the supposition that they were wrought by ordinary agencies. They were often wrought at a distance, by a word, in cases where all human means were unavailable: upon the forces of nature which are beyond the control of man, as the wind and the sea.

(ii.) They were performed in a manner which betokened *the conscious possession by Jesus Christ of inexhaustible power and indisputable authority.*

(iii.) They were accompanied with *a manifestation of knowledge and penetration* into the secrets of men's thoughts and intentions, which shows that they were not mere *coincidences* or *attendant occurrences*, but *true credentials* of Christ's claims.

(iv.) *Jesus Himself appealed to such facts*, as supporting His authority.

(v.) The miracles were of such a character that they perfectly *accord with the mission of the Saviour;* they were *beneficent, wisely dispensed*, intimately connected with

spiritual teaching; never wrought for the sake of *display*, or at the *challenge* of opponents, or for *personal objects.*

(vi.) Comparing the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ with those connected with other names in the Bible, as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Peter, John, and Paul, we see at once the distinction, that *the miracles of Christ were from Himself;* many more in number, and not merely put forth to *authorize* what he said, as Divinely sanctioned, but to prove that He was *what He claimed to be*, the "*Messiah*" and "*the Son of God.*" "*Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake*" (because of the works), John xiv. 11.

(vii.) *But the one chief credential of a miraculous kind is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself from the dead.*

The Resurrection. This was *universally accepted* as the credential of Christianity *within a generation* of the fact itself. It was *boldly proclaimed* by apostles, and others, as such. The *Christian Church rested on it*, as a corner-stone, because it was identified with the claims of Jesus, His authority, His risen power, His living presence in the Church, the duty of serving Him, and the prospects of eternal life He had proclaimed. *The evidence of the fact is sufficient.* It is as follows:—

(i.) *Positive.* He was *seen by His disciples*, after He was risen; as, *e.g.*, (*a*) by *Mary* and *the women;* (*b*) *by Peter;* (*c*) *by James;* (*d*) *by the disciples going to Emmaus;* (*e*) *by the apostles gathered together;* (*f*) *by an assembly of apostles and disciples;* (*g*) *by seven disciples at Lake Tiberias;* (*h*) *at his ascension from Mount Olivet;* and (*i*) lastly, *by the apostle Paul*, near Damascus. He probably manifested Himself on other occasions, when He discoursed with His disciples concerning His kingdom, for it is said (Acts i. 3) that "*He showed himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days.*"

(ii.) *Negative.* The absence in early times of all attempts to disprove the fact, *on the part of enemies.* The

impossibility of sustaining any *adverse theories*, such as will account for the belief which became so rapidly universal. These theories may be summed up under three heads:— (1) Those which *deny the fact* and suppose it introduced into the Gospels in a *later age*. *Some* would boldly charge the writers with intention to deceive; but these are very few. *Others* would place the Gospels in the second century, or parts of them (as Strauss), and would therefore represent the Resurrection as a *myth*, which grew up out of the reverence for the character of Christ. But such writers are refuted by the *proved age of the Gospels*, by the earliest writings of *Christian fathers*, and by the fact that the Christian Church was built up upon the Resurrection, as is plainly seen in the writings of St. Paul (see Romans, and 1 and 2 Corinthians). (2) It has been suggested by some that *Jesus did not really die*, but was laid in the sepulchre in *a state of insensibility!* This is a contradiction of *the facts*, is *incredible*, and is rejected by sceptics, like Strauss, as *absurd*. (3) *The visionary hypothesis* is revived by modern writers, who would fain be regarded as Christian. It is supposed that the followers of Jesus were *credulous and superstitious;* ready for a vision; inclined to make much of it; and so little actuated by *moral* motives, that they could build up the Christian Church upon it. This is *disproved* by the manner in which the Resurrection is referred to in *Christian writings;* by the *character* of the men who believed it; by *the fact* that *enemies* never suggested such an explanation; and by the fact that the apostles distinctly declared that they had "*conversed with the Lord after He had risen, and that He had given them His commandments.*" Then, further, it should be remembered, that the disciples did not *expect* the Resurrection; were not in any *enthusiastic state* when it occurred, but, rather, depressed and disconsolate; did not *treat it as a vision*, but as a fact; preached its *moral fitness* and the *fulfilment of Christ's own*

words concerning it, and of the *Old Testament prophecies; proclaimed it* as the credential of the Messiah to Jews and Gentiles. As to the evidence of such a hypothesis being entertained in early times, *there is none*, for *the body of Jesus could have been produced*, if necessary, to destroy the belief in a mere vision; unless it were preached as such and nothing more. (4) The latest theory is, that of a *spiritual appearance of the Lord, His body being left in the grave.* In that case, it would of course "*see corruption*," which the first Christians distinctly denied. If it is meant, however (as it is by some) that the spiritual Resurrection of Jesus Christ *involved the rising of His body*, or *absorption of the flesh into the spirit*, then it can only be objected that such is not the view which *the apostles evidently themselves took* of the fact; and that, while it relieves us of *no difficulty*, on account of the greatness of the work accomplished, it introduces a *new and incomprehensible problem*, namely, *how the spiritual body could absorb, or dissipate, or in any other way cause to disappear, the material or fleshly body.* That there was a *spiritual change, a transformation*, is evident, and was foretold by *the Transfiguration;* that it may be truly described as *a Resurrection*, is the *main point* to be held fast; that if proclaimed *victory over death, and a future eternal life.* But we must strenuously insist on the *sincerity and straightforward truthfulness of the Christian writers.* There was no *delusion*, there was no *illusion*, there was no *collusion;* there was no *fixed idea*, or *expectation*, working upon their minds, and producing statements *without objective reality.* It is perfectly true, as eminent scientific men have admitted, that the evidence for the Resurrection is *a wider and better evidence* than that for any other miracle, and *it carries all the rest with it*, for the greater includes the less. The Resurrection was not *only* a credential, but itself a *substantial part of the gospel message to the world.*

4. *The influence of Jesus Christ upon His immediate followers*, is another proof of His authority. Whatever we

know of Christ has come to us through those who were with Him, who were, as the evangelist Luke states, "*from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word*" (Luke i. 2). He wrote nothing down Himself. It is a well-known fact that the Jews were always, and especially in the later times of their history, very reluctant to *write down* what might be regarded as "*Scripture.*" Yet we have a number of books *written by Jews*, which came to be held as on a level with *the books of the Old Testament.* Had the writers been actuated by nothing more than their own *private thoughts and aims*, it is impossible to explain the fact that they were regarded by their contemporaries as *writing with authority.* Then, moreover, with the exceptions of St. Luke and St. Paul, those whose names are attached to the New Testament writings were not highly trained *literary men*, but came from the class of *fishermen of Galilee*, or *men of business*, such as Matthew the publican. If such men really wrote the works to which their name is attached, a great change must have been wrought in them, which was due to *the personal influence of Jesus Christ.* The simple fact that there were twelve Jews, who, after the death of Jesus, represented Him to the world, cannot be denied, in face of the evidence to be derived from the books of the New Testament, and from the early Christian writings. Consider, then, *what is implied in that fact.* The *ordinary Jew*, of the time of Christ, was a very different man from an apostle of Christ. He was under the influence of *rabbinical teaching*, which would make Him *narrow, bigoted, formal, ritualistic.* He would be quite incapable of *preaching*, and would not be sufficiently instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures to *argue in synagogues.* He would have *no motive* to leave His home, and common life, in order to visit other countries on a *religious errand.* He would be unprepared to meet the dangers of that *fierce opposition*, which all new doctrines encounter, in such a people and time as those in which Christianity commenced. Now, the his-

torical necessities of the case prove that the apostles must have been lifted, by the presence and influence of Jesus Christ, completely *above their ordinary life*, and filled with a new spirit. The instances of *the eleven*, who were immediate companions of Jesus, must have been examples of moral and spiritual change, simply inexplicable on any other ground than *the influence of the Lord Himself;* and if the moral miracle of their change is to be attributed to Him, then He must have been, substantially, *what they represent Him.* The apostle Paul stands by himself as proving, apart from the miraculous conversion narrated in the Acts (ix. 1–9), that one who was of *the highest order of mind*, and above suspicion as a *truthful and earnest man*, not only believed in the facts of Christ's history and in His claims as the Messiah, but was changed by Him from being a persecutor of Christians to be the "apostle of the Gentiles," and devoted the whole of his remaining life to preaching the gospel, sealing his testimony with his blood. It is now admitted by all critics, even those who reject much of the New Testament as not authentic, that four of St. Paul's Epistles—*Romans*, 1 *and* 2 *Corinthians, and Galatians*—were written by him. They fully prove that he accepted *the facts of the Gospels*, especially *the Resurrection;* that he preached what is now regarded as *the doctrine Christ taught;* that the *early Christian Church* was founded on the basis of the same faith which he professed; therefore the whole of the New Testament came forth from Christ, as the true source of it.

The influence of Christ on His followers was morally miraculous, inasmuch as they were completely delivered from their *popular Jewish prejudices* and became *spiritually minded men.* This is witnessed by the fact that their preaching was distasteful to the Jewish authorities of their day, and that the Christian Church which was founded by them, in Jerusalem, and other places, while largely composed of those who were Jews by nation, and

retaining some Jewish narrowness, still proclaimed the gospel to the world as a *doctrine of liberty* which superseded the Judaism of former times.

Another evidence of the power which Jesus Christ exercised on His followers is seen in the contrast between the apostles and those who *immediately* succeeded them, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *leaders of the Christian Church* after time had *obscured* the teaching of the first disciples to some extent. When we compare the writings of the New Testament with those of men less under the influence of Christ, such as *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus*, *Cyprian* and *Tertullian*, *Clement of Alexandria*, and *Origen*, we are compelled to admit that, while there is intellectual power and culture in the later writers, there is a very much lower degree of *spiritual enlightenment*, much less of *simplicity and sincerity*, and much more of the influence of merely *human philosophy and current opinion*. In other words, those who received the impression of Christ's teaching and character more *immediately and purely*, who reflect it more *accurately in their writings*, are incalculably *superior* to those who, being farther off from Him, have less of His Spirit and more of themselves in their writings. This, therefore, argues that *Christ Himself must have been not less, but greater, than His followers.*

We may add to this argument the consideration of *the unity of representation*, which we find in the New Testament, in the *variety of the apostolic character and doctrine*. This may be regarded in the *three main aspects* of the early Christian thought and spirit, expressed by the three leading apostles, *St. Peter*, *St. Paul*, and *St. John*. Each writes from his own standpoint; yet their doctrines do not in the least clash with one another, but perfectly *harmonize*. The Pauline representation of Christ and Christianity is much more theologically developed than that of the first and second Epistles of St. Peter, or that

which we find in the first few chapters of the Acts of the Apostles; but when we compare both with the first three Gospels, we find that *the centre is the same*, though *the circumference is expanded;* and when we place the Gospel and Epistles of John beside the three first Gospels and the writings of Peter and Paul, there is *no contradiction.* The central facts are the same, only that they are set in *a more direct light of Divine glory;* and a more *seer-like spirit*, in the apostle John, deals with the truth of Christ's words. Is it possible that three such different men should have written of Jesus Christ, and expounded His doctrine, and yet have remained *so entirely at one in all essential matters*, unless His ministry had been what it is represented to have been, and unless He had been Himself *above man?* It should be remembered, too, that in the case of the apostle John, there was very little which could be accounted extraneous to the influence of Christ upon him. He was quite a young man when Jesus ascended to heaven; he remained for some fifty or sixty years an apostle; his writings betray no perversion of his Christian faith or of the simplicity of his character; we may, without going beyond the evidence of the facts, say of him, that the whole of what he was and what he wrote came forth, like a flower from the seed, out of the *one centre, the influence which Jesus exercised upon him*, during the three and a half years of His public ministry. Upon that the Spirit of God wrought, and the fruit is seen in the apostle. If John was such as he was because he learned of Jesus, *how great and wonderful must Jesus Himself have been!*

5. And then, lastly, looking at *the four Gospels as they stand* before us, so perfectly simple, inartistic, and truthful, in style and character, they must be admitted to bear witness to the greatness and authority of Jesus Christ. For had *He* been *less, they* would certainly have been *more.* If the writers had been dealing with materials which they

felt were mingled with falsehood or uncertainty; if they had been telling of facts which they themselves only half believed; or if they were conscious of exaggeration, of enthusiastic idealism, or of any other motive which led them to deal with what they had artificially, then we should *trace their hand* in the narrative quite distinctly, as we do in some of the classical historians, as Thucydides and Livy. But the Gospels seem to be the *simplest possible records* of what was remembered of Jesus and His teaching; put together *artlessly*, and with apparent feeling of deep *reverence* and even *self-distrust;* showing that the majesty and glory of Christ had impressed His disciples to such an extent that they would not dare to do more than *describe the facts* and *record the words*, some of which they plainly did not perfectly understand. The Divine authority of the Saviour shines through the pages of the evangelists, and they are His credentials.

The Credentials of Christianity as the Religion of the Bible.

It cannot be denied that if man needs a special Divine revelation, such a revelation will be given to him. The need is proved by the state of the world generally; by the insufficiency of nature apart from such special revelation; by the confusion and uncertainty in men's thoughts; by the corrupt character of those religions which were either entirely heathen or manifestly perversions of that which came with Divine authority, such as the degenerate Judaism of the Jewish Rabbinical schools, and Mohammedanism. It is reasonable that the Spirit of God should move and work with especial power and direct teaching somewhere in such a world, that there should be a true Light to be found in the midst of so much darkness and error.

The history which we are able to connect with the writings of the Old and New Testaments sustains the claim which they make to be received as forming a continuous course of special Divine communications, beginning in remote times, culminating in the personal advent of the Son of God and the foundation of the Christian Church. In that history there are miraculous events, like the deliverance of ancient Israel from Egypt, the return of the exiles from Babylon, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, which, like solid pillars, hold up the whole structure of Scripture. The facts and the words confirm one another. The same may be said of the prophetic portions of the Bible as compared with their fulfilments. The facts cannot be disputed; the words can be proved in many cases to have been written before the facts; they could not have been anticipations due to mere human wisdom and foresight, they must have been the effects of the Divine Spirit working on the human spirit. Moreover, such predictions follow one another age after age, from the remotest times down to the time of Christ; and are connected with a line of good men who appeared in one people and land, where very much of the Spirit of God manifested itself, and Divine teaching was much more abundant than elsewhere in the world. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the books which remain to us from the Jewish people, intimately connected together as they are by one unbroken line of truth and promise, which at last comes forth into full expression in Jesus Christ, are inspired of God; that is, have been given to the world with His special authority attached to them, for the purpose of forming a depositary of religious doctrine, in which the true light can be found, and which "maketh wise unto salvation."

There is no necessity, while accepting this position, to commit ourselves to any definite theory as to *the method of inspiration.* "*Holy men of God spake as they were moved*

by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). The mode by which the Spirit wrought varied. Some writings were simply gathered together from the past; some were the fruit of immediate spiritual impulse; some were carefully thought out and prepared after long meditation. But the one important criterion of authority was the writer's obedience to a Divine command to set down that which was given to him by the Spirit. His own position as a man of God, and the acknowledgment of that position by the men of God around him and immediately after him, must be our warrant that he was not deceived, and that what he has written is sanctioned as Divine. It cannot be denied that both the ancient Jewish Church in receiving the books of the Old Testament, and the Christian Church in putting together the books of the New Testament, *may* have erred in part; but it must not be taken for granted that they have done so Those who make the charge are bound to prove it. At present there are very few of the books of Scripture which have not commended themselves to the world as worthy of the place assigned them. It must also be admitted that the *inspiration* of Scripture cannot properly mean the *mechanical dictation of the words*, but the *presence and authority of the Spirit* in the writings as a whole. We are not in possession of sufficient evidence to be able to prove that in every instance we have the *exact words* which were first written down. But the mind of the Spirit is preserved, and the end of revelation is reached, although uncertainty may rest upon the form in which it is conveyed.

The credentials of the Bible are threefold: (i.) those which *certify its authenticity;* (ii.) those which testify to its *superhuman authority;* (iii.) those which prove its superiority as *adapted to the spiritual wants of man.* These we will briefly describe, reminding the reader that an outline of so large a subject is alone possible within our limited space.

1. *Credentials which certify the authenticity of the books of the Bible.*

The books bear upon the face of them the claim to be given with authority. In the Old Testament the books of Moses, *i.e.* the first five books, are called the Law; they were kept in the ark of the covenant as a witness (Deut. xxxi. 9, 26). Samuel wrote the manner of the kingdom, and laid it up before the Lord (1 Sam. x. 25). Solomon placed the books of Scripture in the new temple. The people are invited to "*seek out of the book of the Lord and read*" (Isa. xxxiv. 16). Moreover, in several places it is prescribed as a duty to recite the Scriptures publicly, which implies their being preserved and authenticated. Then, again, the different parts of Scripture bear witness to the rest—the later books to the earlier, the New Testament to the Old Testament. We may notice, too, such expressions as the following: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2); "Thus saith the Lord;" "The word of the Lord came unto me;" "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Jer. i. 6; Isa. vi. 9; Amos iii. 7). We know that the Jews were exceedingly careful of their sacred writings, and in remembrance of the injunction (Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32) could neither add to nor take from the written Word except under the manifest command of the Spirit. That our Lord Jesus Christ recognized the authority of the Old Testament is evident from such passages as John v. 39; Matt. xxii. 29; Luke xxiv. 27, and others. The New Testament writers frequently quote from the books of the Old Testament as the Word of God. By the side of this evidence from the books themselves may be placed the fact that a number of books, now collected in the *Apocrypha*, were in use among the Jews for centuries after the last of the prophets wrote, but were never regarded as sacred Scripture by the Jews of Palestine, nor by the New Testament writers. After the

time of the return of the Jews from Babylon synagogue worship prevailed, and copies of the sacred books became common. The persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes (168 B.C.) promoted the preservation of that which maintained the life of Judaism. It is known that from that time the books were put together as a single volume, and regarded as a Bible. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (made about 285 B.C.), probably included in the first form of it no more than the books which we acknowledge as the Word of God, though in subsequent editions other uninspired books were added. There can be no doubt that the Jewish schools of scribes gave the greatest attention to the preservation of the sacred books for many centuries. From the sixth to the ninth century of the Christian era the scholars called *Masoretes*, the authors of a collection of traditional readings called *Masora*, devoted themselves with immense learning and assiduity to ascertaining the exact text of the Old Testament; and they were followed by grammarians and expositors who confirmed the results obtained by their predecessors. The testimony of individuals is also of great weight, as that of Josephus (A.D. 37–97), and that of Philo-Judæus, the Alexandrian, contemporary with our Lord; both used the Old Testament as we now receive it, and never attached the authority of Scripture to the uninspired writings, such as are found in the Apocrypha.

In the case of the New Testament the evidence is that of manuscripts, catalogues, versions, and quotations. Our manuscripts do not go back farther than the fourth century (the Sinaitic and the Vatican); others, such as the Alexandrian, in the British Museum, that of Ephraem, and that of Beza, are from the fifth to the seventh century. But while these copies of the original books were made centuries later than the books themselves, we possess *early catalogues* of the books of the New Testament, which show

what were in use, such as the "Muratorian Fragment" (A.D. 160–170), confirming most of the books. *The Versions*, or translations from the Greek into other languages, are some of them very early, as the ancient Syriac or Peshito, in the second century, and the early Latin or Itala. And then, lastly, the writings of early Christian fathers contain quotations from the sacred books which, although loosely made, still substantially agree with our text of the Scriptures. This evidence can be followed in respect to each separate book of the New Testament, by consulting such a work as Alford's Greek Testament. In the case of the four Gospels, which is much the most important part of the subject, as the attacks of adverse critics have been chiefly directed to them, the labours of *Dr. Sanday*, in his work on "The Gospels in the Second Century," have abundantly established the authenticity of our Gospels in substantially the same text as that we possess. The references to St. Paul's Epistles among the Christian writers of the second century are frequent, and it is impossible to doubt that most of them were at that time universally acknowledged to be genuine. No critic of any standing now hesitates to accept Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. Marcion, the heretic, published a collection of sacred books, which he called "The Gospel" and "The Apostle" (Apostolicon), probably about A.D. 140, and in those books he confirms the use of the Gospel of Luke and of all the Epistles of St. Paul, except those to Timothy and Titus, and Hebrews. The heathen writer, Celsus, who lived probably about the same time, was familiar with the Gospels; and another heathen writer, Lucian, refers to the writings of the apostle Paul.

The most determined opposition of the unbelievers, however, has been to the fourth Gospel, partly, no doubt, from its character as bearing witness to the Divine authority of Jesus Christ. It has been asserted that the

preface, or prologue, on the Word, or Logos (ch. i. 1–14), must have been written by an Alexandrian philosopher, and that the whole Gospel must have been put together some time in the second century. But when the question is asked, By whom? no name can be suggested. Justin Martyr evidently used it, and refers to it as part of Scripture. No Christian would dare to forge the name of *John the apostle.* No heretic or unbeliever would be capable of composing such a work, neither could he have gained for it the authorization of the Christian Church of that time. Moreover, it should be remembered that the uncertainty, if any, ceases about A.D. 170, when the quotations from the Gospel, and references to it, became so abundant that no one can doubt that its authority was universally acknowledged. "The chain of evidence is complete and continuous. Not one historical doubt is raised from any quarter, and the lines of evidence converge towards the point where the Gospel was written, and from which it was delivered to the Churches" (Westcott, "Bible in the Church").

The rationalistic school of Germany, represented by Baur, Schenkel, Strauss, Keim, Hausrath, and others, have applied their own philosophical conceptions to the New Testament, and attempted to draw from it an explanation of the facts of early Christian history, without admitting miracles or the Divine character of Jesus Christ, but they have failed, either to meet the undoubted demands of historical consistency, or to put together a valid theory which commends itself to common sense. We cannot, in this place, describe their failure fully. The admixture, they are compelled to suppose, of conscious fraud and untruthfulness, in the Gospel narratives, cannot be reconciled with the character of the first Christians, or with the spiritual power manifested in the early Church. The date of the New Testament is now ascertained to be at least within forty years of the death of Christ. That

would not allow sufficient time for *myths* and *legends* and superstitious exaggerations to have grown up, as they suppose, around a small substratum of historical fact. It is certain that *some* disciples were alive when the Gospels were written; and they *could* not have been deceived by idle tales and "*cunningly devised fables.*" The apostle John lived to the end of the first century; he would never have sanctioned the use of Gospels which falsified the facts. He himself wrote his own Gospel to supplement the other three, and that was a sufficient proof that he accepted them as an accurate account of the Lord's history, so far as they went. When he wrote his Gospel the Christian Church had been using the first three Gospels for many years; and the substance of what they contained had been preached, over and over again, both by the apostles and by others, forming the foundation on which the communities of Christians had been built up. An attempt has been made, in the anonymous work, "Supernatural Religion," to invalidate the authority of the New Testament; but it has signally failed The writer admits that his principal aim is to remove from Scripture all that bears witness to the *supernatural*, and to retain nothing beyond the *general moral teaching* which is included in Christianity. Such a spirit is not candid and fair. Let the writings be first proved authentic, and then let their teaching be studied in itself. *Renan*, the French critic, admits that he cannot overthrow the argument for the early date of the Gospels, while he refuses to accept the Christian Creed. His attempt to reconstruct the "Life of Jesus" and the history of the early Church, on the basis of his own conception of what must have been the facts, has only contributed to elucidate the superhuman element, by showing that it cannot be dispensed with.

2. *Credentials which certify the superhuman authority of the Bible.* These may be summed up briefly, as follows:—(*a*) The books cover a period of fifteen hundred years; during

the whole of that time there was a *connected series of events* with which the teaching of the Bible corresponds in a manner so remarkable that it could not be mere chance, must have been divinely appointed. There were *miracles* which were essentially included in these events, such as the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the establishment of the twelve tribes in Palestine, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, the advent of Jesus Christ, the ministry of the apostles. We cannot explain any one of these without the others; the Bible is a series of writings closely connected together by a unity of *purpose and meaning* which reflects the unity of *providential appointment.* The authority of the books, therefore, was not the authority of the writers alone, but of Him who ordered the events out of which the books came, of Him who maintained the continuous line of redeeming grace, which we can discern along the history of the people of Israel, from the time of Moses to the rise of the Christian Church. (*b*) There is a *miraculous foresight* in the predictions, which are found in most of the books of the Bible. Such predictions could not have been mere anticipations of the future by the power of human intellect; nor can we compare them with any merely human speculations on the tendencies of things, or heathen oracles, or wise forecastings. They are clear and definite, and, as time went on, they became clearer and fuller, while preserving the same central meaning. The *promise of a Redeemer* is found in the records of man's fall in Genesis; it is repeated through all the books of the Old Testament; and in the writings of the prophets, six hundred years before the advent of the Messiah, it is dwelt upon very largely, the person and the work of the Redeemer being described, and even the place where He should be born, and the time when He should appear. The prophecies which we find in Isaiah and Daniel and Micah, could not have been written had they not been preceded by others,

such as we find in the Psalms, and in the Pentateuch. And if it be objected that we are apt to read into the words a deeper meaning than they were intended by the writers to convey, it should be remembered that the *Messianic tradition* was handed down among the Jews from the earliest times. Indeed, it may be said that the whole Mosaic system rested upon the promise of a Redeemer; it was "*a shadow of good things to come.*" The people always expected a great prophet, who should effect for them a greater deliverance than that which rescued them from Egypt. The prophets called them from their idolatry and from their formality, not to a mere morality or a purer form of worship, but to *wait for the appearing of the Messiah;* hence, when Jesus came there was a prevalent expectation that prophecies were about to be fulfilled. We cannot, in this place, attempt to give examples of fulfilled predictions. The fact that the Bible is so full of prophecy, and that, at all events, the general scope and most essential meaning of such prophecies has been realized, proves that the books, written during fifteen hundred years, and all connected together by the one purpose of Redemption, could not have proceeded from human sources alone. (*c*) Putting the books of the Bible *side by side with heathen and uninspired writings* of the same periods, and keeping in mind the circumstances in which the Jewish people were placed, it seems impossible to gainsay the superhuman origin of the sacred writings. There is an entire *absence of superstition*, a perfect *simplicity* and *purity* of aim, a very elevated *spiritual feeling* in many places, a *depth* of meaning, which wonderfully contrasts with the superficiality and emptiness in most of the writings of the heathen world on moral subjects, and, above all, while reflecting the facts of Jewish history and life, a *superiority to Jewish narrowness and bigotry.* How is it that the very best of all the Jewish writings should be thus put together, and that nothing should be found mingled with them which is unworthy of

being preserved, so that the Old Testament and the New Testament confirm and vindicate one another in so marvellous a manner? Can such a fact be explained except on the ground that the books were *inspired;* that a special providential guardianship watched over both the writers and that which they wrote; and that the Spirit of God guided the minds of those to whom the writings were sent, that they should keep them uncorrupted and hand them down in their integrity, separated from the mass of error and folly surrounding them? When we examine the books of heathen religions we find that, while the earliest are comparatively pure and lofty in their teaching, the later are full of corruption and superstition; it is not so with the books of the Bible. The writings of the prophets were produced, many of them, in the most corrupt ages of the Jewish history; but they bear witness to that corruption only by reproving and condemning it. The religious practices of the Jews were superstitious and formal, in the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but there is no departure in the words of the prophets from the original strictness of the Law; the aim of the later writers is to bring back the people to the faith from which they had fallen away, and hold up to view the purpose of Redeeming Love. So, again, in the Bible there is *one consistent rule of moral doctrine* in all the variety found there, from Moses to Christ; but in heathen writings there is confusion and uncertainty: while in the highest specimens of philosophical thought, such as the writings of Plato, we find abundant evidences of the practical powerlessness of the religious systems out of which such writings sprang. The heathen writers, if they wrote noble and pure sentiments, proposed no remedies for the moral evils which their own writings admit to be prevalent around them. The Jewish writings not only condemn the evil, but promise deliverance from it. Such books were not the mere products of intellectual superiority and exceptional goodness in individuals; they

point to the presence and work of the Spirit of God in a body of believers, preserved by special Divine grace in the midst of the nation. There is no such fact testified in the remains of heathen writings, such as we possess; we may, therefore, fairly reason, that the Bible is the outcome of an exceptional bestowment of spiritual communications, with which there is no parallel elsewhere in the world. [This view is very fully exemplified by Prof. Henry Rogers, in his work, "The Superhuman Origin of the Bible proved from Itself."] (*d*) *The Bible culminates in Jesus Christ.* It is authorized by its own completeness. It is not a mere aggregate of disconnected fragments. The books of the New Testament set before us a *Divine Person*, a perfect *rule of life*, a *body of doctrine*, a *way of salvation*, leaving nothing to be added, in after times, in the form of revelation. Christianity is not what uninspired writers have chosen to represent it to be, or what may have been developed historically out of the first beginnings of the Christian Church, but what is embodied in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The test of a *practical application* of that New Testament Christianity, suffices to show that the writings could not have proceeded from merely human sources. When we compare the books of the New Testament with those which were written only a few years, or a few generations, after the last of the apostles, St. John, was taken away, we recognize the immeasurable superiority of the sacred writings. Such a fact points to the *completeness* of the revelation in the ministries of Jesus Christ and His apostles. The Word of Life came in the Saviour Himself. Those who "*saw with their eyes, beheld, handled with their hands, that which was from the beginning*" (1 John i. 1, 2), simply bore witness, expounding and declaring the Word. They *added* nothing to what Jesus Himself taught, but they unfolded it more explicitly. The kingdom of heaven was thus opened. When it was opened there was no

addition made to it. And that manifest *completeness* is itself a Divine evidence of the *authority* of that which makes up the whole.

3. *Credentials of the Bible in its adaptation to the spiritual wants of man.*

No religion can meet such wants which is not manifestly above the level of ordinary human life in its moral and spiritual teaching. There must not only be *some* elements of higher doctrine included in it, but there must be *no compromise* of moral truth and law to suit the weakness and corruption of men. Heathen religions have failed to elevate mankind, because they were impure and reflected men's own evil tendencies.

(I.) *Substance.* There must be in that which professes to come with Divine authority, (i.) a representation of the character and ways of God which leads man to a pure and spiritual worship; (ii.) a declaration of the will and law of God such as confirms the dictates of the moral nature and purges the conscience from dead works; (iii.) a proclamation of peace and reconciliation, opening the way to a cheerful and grateful obedience to Divine commandments; (iv.) a promise of new strength and happiness, to encourage the weak and to animate the heart with hope in anticipation of the future. All these are found in the Bible, and are certainly not found elsewhere.

(II.) *Form.* The book which meets the spiritual wants of man must be one which comes to him in a *form adapted to touch his sympathies and win his confidence.* It must not be in a *philosophical* shape, otherwise the few alone will understand it, and the many will remain indifferent to it. It must not be a mere *collection of moral sayings*, otherwise it will become antiquated, and fail to touch the heart. It must not be the product of mere *human genius*, either of one mind or of many minds, speaking only from themselves, for then it would be apt to be eclipsed or superseded by other similar productions in the course of time.

It ought to be *mainly historical;* it should describe the facts of *Divine dealing* with mankind; it should appeal *from human experience to human experience;* and it should be written by men of like passions and infirmities with others, so that its language shall be the language of *common life*, and yet, as used by those who themselves were filled with the Spirit of God, language steeped in *spiritual* meaning and reality. And, lastly, there must be in the book which claims to be Divine in its authority, a *breadth* and *universality* which adapts it to all classes and conditions of men. It must come out of a particular nation, otherwise it would lack definiteness and decision; but it must not inculcate a merely *national* religion. It must bear upon its surface the marks of its origin as a historical religion; but the substance of it must be so thoroughly *human* and *cosmopolitan*, that the merely superficial features, which may be reflections of a time and people gone by, can be set aside for the sake of that which is essential.

Now, if we examine any of the heathen systems, or Mohammedanism, we find that there is very little in them which can be adapted to universal use. They are so full of that which is sprung from human error, custom, superstition, and local prejudice, that to attempt to make them cosmopolitan would be an utter failure. But while the Bible is from the Jews, and describes Jewish history and Jewish law, and the faith which grew up in Palestine, still it is pervaded, from beginning to end, with a *spirit of humanity and universalism:* it proclaims, from the first, a message of salvation for all the families of the earth; it describes a Divine method of procedure, which led to the preaching of the gospel to all the world; and it concludes with a prediction of universal blessedness. Moreover, it is a fact, that men of "every nation under heaven" have accepted this message of life; and that the religious character which has grown up from this

same seed of Bible truth, sown in all parts of the world, corresponds, in the main elements of it, notwithstanding all the variety of nationality and external circumstances. The true believer in the Bible is everywhere substantially the same, that is, a man somewhat resembling Jesus Christ, whose character, it is admitted on all hands, was perfection. The book which by its influence tends to produce men and women like Jesus Christ carries its own authority with it.

Nor will it avail the objector to set over against this evidence the imperfections and inconsistencies of professed Christians. For they themselves will be the first to admit that they are faulty representatives of the Bible. A law is not invalidated by the fact that those who live where it is acknowledged are condemned by it. Even though the law should fail of vindication for lack of external authority, that would not prove that the law itself was not good. That the Bible has not yet accomplished its work in the world is no argument against its Divine origin We are poor judges of the course of events. The influences which we are unable to trace sometimes reveal themselves where we thought they were not; and issues come forth which astonish us, because we have not known that they were being prepared. The Bible-lands, where the authority of the Scriptures is acknowledged, Europe, Australia, America, the islands of the Pacific, and the countries where Christian missionaries have planted the gospel, contain the best specimens of humanity and lead the world in all that is great and good. No other religion has produced such men, or is able to produce them.

The Credentials of Christianity as the Religion of the Christian Church.

The word "Church" may be differently defined; but there are included in it the following chief facts: (i.) the *meeting together* from time to time for religious

worship of those who hold certain common beliefs; (ii.) the public *profession of faith* on the part of individuals, separating themselves from others who make no such profession, and making their profession of faith *the basis of their life;* (iii.) observance of *two leading rites, baptism and the Lord's Supper*—the one representing the commencement of the Christian life, and the other fellowship and faithfulness. We need not go further in describing the Christian Church. All questions of *creed* and *Church government* may be left unanswered in this argument. It is certain that there were many corruptions of doctrine and practice, which grew up in the course of the centuries after the time of the apostles. They attached themselves firmly to the *systems* which were maintained among Christians; but it does not follow that they were in any proper sense to be ascribed to the Christian Church, *as Christ Himself founded it in the world.* What we must insist upon, however, is this, that (i.) there was a *living root of Christianity* growing, before there were *false growths* attached to it; (ii.) that *the Church of the Middle Ages* could not have existed had it not been preceded by *the Church of the first three centuries;* and (iii.) that *the Church of the second and third centuries,* while including in itself very much that was due to the men and the times through which it lived, and much which was not properly sanctioned by Christ, could not have existed had it not been preceded by the *Church of the apostles and their contemporaries.* We can fairly separate, therefore, the *apostolic elements* in the faith and practice of Christendom from the rest, and trace them back to *the first beginnings of Christianity;* and the result of that process is to prove that *all that is essential to the Christian religion* is historically confirmed; and that beyond all reasonable doubt.

1. The Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity about A.D. 312. He made Christianity the religion

of the Roman Empire. He could not have done so had there not been at that time a *body of doctrine* and a *customary form of worship* which were identified with the name of Christians. However we describe the Christian Church of Constantine's time, it is certain that the following leading features of it came down from *the days of the apostles*: (i.) *Jesus Christ* was believed to be *the Saviour of the world*, and the representation given of Him in the New Testament was generally accepted. (ii.) The two Christian rites of *baptism and the Lord's Supper* were observed from the beginning, and were taken to mean a new birth and a new life, which new birth and new life are taught in the New Testament. Whether the views held of the rites corresponded with those taught by the apostles or not, it does not concern us to decide. The fact of the *continued observance of the rites* can only be accounted for by the *tradition* which came down from the time of Christ. (iii.) The really devout and sincere Christians were remarkable for their *self-denial*, *benevolence*, and *hopefulness*, and were distinguished by their moral character generally, from their contemporaries; they professed to follow *the example of Jesus Christ* and *the rule laid down in the New Testament;* and many of them died to prove their faithfulness to the Christian standard. They could not have learned such a life from the example of their neighbours, nor from the writings of heathen teachers, which, while they, in some cases, inculcated moral goodness, fell very far short of the New Testament. Now, it must be remembered that, while in three centuries Christians multiplied to such an extent that at last the very Empire of Rome itself became nominally Christian, still there was nothing to account for this spread of Christianity but the fact that men were *persuaded* to accept it; that is to say, the influence of the *facts* and *doctrines* obtained power over their thoughts and lives: as Gibbon, the sceptical historian, has expressed it,

"*a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol.*" It may be quite true that *God prepared the way* for this triumph of Christianity, both by the ruin of the heathen world and by the work of His Spirit in many different forms upon the thoughts of men; but the fact remains indisputable that there could not have been the spread of the doctrine unless the doctrine had been in existence, and had come down from the time of the apostles, and unless the foundation of historical truth had been first laid in *the events of the Saviour's history*.

2. *The Christian Church of the second century* bears abundant witness to the truth and authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures. We select out of a great many instances a few which will serve to show that those Scriptures were known and read in different parts of the world, *e.g.* Asia Minor, Italy, France, and Syria.

(i.) *Asia Minor.* We open the writings of *Justin Martyr*, who was born about A.D. 87 at Flavia Neapolis (now Nablous near the ancient Sychem) in Palestine, and lived much of his life in Ephesus, where the apostle John taught, and which was a kind of capital city, commanding by its influence an immense district of Asia; in these writings we find abundant evidence that the Gospels were familiarly known and the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments read. Justin defends the Christians from the false charges made against them to the Roman emperors of that time (Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius). The date of these writings is about A.D. 150. So that a writer in the midst of the second century bears witness to the use of the Scriptures in Asia Minor at that time. He points to fulfilment of ancient prophecy in Jesus Christ, and describes fully the two Christian rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the meetings held on the Lord's

day. He holds a dialogue with a Jew, Trypho, in which he quotes largely from the Old Testament, and compares it with the records of the Gospels. He refers to all the facts of the Lord's life and death. He confirms all the four Gospels, more or less distinctly. He mentions some of the other books of the New Testament, as *e.g.* Revelation, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Hebrews, Acts; everywhere he shows that he is familiar with the writings of St. Paul, with his doctrine and with his language. The following is the summary, given by a learned writer, of his evidence as regards Christianity: "Throughout, Justin claims to possess, and to show forth, with a certainty attested by sacrifice and death, a solid body of certified doctrine, which *apostolic* authority sealed and secured; Christ, as He had been foretold by prophets and announced to the world by apostles, is the assured ground of his faith. The apostles are the twelve bells on the border of the high priest's garment, with the sound of whose ringing the whole world has been filled (see Dial. 42, § 263, c.); the apostles are the evangelical preachers in whose person Isaiah cried, 'Lord, who hath believed our report?' the apostles are 'the brethren in the midst of whom' Christ gives praise unto God." This testimony then suffices to show that in the middle of the second century the Scriptures were familiarly used and universally acknowledged in Asia Minor.

(ii.) *Rome and Italy.* There is clear proof that, about A.D. 154, *Marcion,* the son of the bishop of Sinope, came to Rome and had an interview there with Polycarp. Marcion rejected the orthodox creed in some of its doctrines, and was particularly opposed to the teaching of the Old Testament. He was regarded as a dangerous heretic; but obtained very great influence at Rome and elsewhere. He drew up two volumes of sacred writings, the one of which he called "The Gospel," and the other "The Apostle." The former is founded upon our present Gospel

of Luke, and the latter includes all the Epistles of Paul, except 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; he also excludes Hebrews, and the other books of the New Testament. But it is well known that he rejected these books not because he did not know of their existence, but because he could not make them agree with his doctrine. It is quite certain that the sacred books which Marcion thus mutilates and puts together for his own purposes had been in use among Christians long before. He would not have given them such titles, "Gospel" and "Apostle," unless they had been acknowledged. His readings of St. Luke's Gospel show that it had been long enough in existence, and had been copied so often, that different types of text had had time to establish themselves, and corruptions of the original Gospel had been transmitted through the copies; to admit of this taking place, we must suppose at least some fifty years to have passed by, so that we are brought to the end of the first century, and close to the time of the apostles. This evidence from the writings of Marcion is so clear and strong that no candid mind can resist it.

(iii.) *France.* *Irenæus* was bishop of Lyons about the same time or a little later. He was a native of Asia Minor; had seen and heard Polycarp of Smyrna, the disciple of St. John, in his youth; was presbyter of Lyons in A.D. 177, and carried thence a letter from the Christians there to Rome, and was made bishop of Lyons in the same year. He was born about A.D. 126. He therefore represents the beliefs and customary ideas of Christians during the first half of the second century. We find in his writings a very explicit account of Christian doctrine and practice, which he expounds in opposition to Gnostic heresies prevailing at that time. There are several names which may be mentioned together as nearly contemporary, and they represent the widespread belief of the growing Christian Church in Italy, France, and Africa, all in virtual agree-

ment as to fundamental doctrine, and especially as to the use of the Scriptures. These names are Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. No one can refuse to accept the bulk of their works as genuine and authentic, and the testimony which they bear to the Scriptures is overwhelming. They were quite familiar with the Old and New Testaments, and substantially as we now possess them.

(iv.) *Syria and the East.* A very remarkable confirmation of the spread of Christianity in the second century is found in the writings of a man who never renounced heathenism, though he was evidently a sceptic and unbeliever in religion generally. *Lucian*, the wit and satirist, was born at Samosata on the Euphrates, not far from the confines of Cilicia, and, therefore, from the apostle Paul's birthplace, Tarsus, about A.D. 120. He was in Greece in A.D. 165, and witnessed there a strange scene, which he describes—the self-immolation by fire of a renegade Christian named Peregrinus, who was challenged by his enemies to offer himself up as a sacrifice in the flames, and in a fit of fanaticism did so. In describing this man's history, Lucian refers to the Christians and to their writings in the most remarkable manner, to their simple worship and to their benevolent and self-denying lives. He says that "the leader of the Christians, whom they yet adore, was crucified in Palestine, for introducing this new sect." And after relating instances of the generosity and charitableness of the Christians, and how they sent their deputies from cities of Asia to give assistance where it was required, he adds, "These poor men, it seems, had persuaded themselves that they should be immortal and live for ever. They despised death, therefore, and offered up their lives a voluntary sacrifice, being taught by their lawgiver that they were all brethren, and that, quitting our Grecian gods, they must worship their own sophist, who was crucified, and live in obedience to his laws. In compliance

with these they looked with contempt on all worldly treasures, and held everything in common—a maxim which they had adopted without reason and foundation." It is very remarkable that this heathen writer, who lived in the middle of the second century, not only bears witness to the fact that Christians were spread through Asia, but that they were such as the early Christians were in the time of the apostles, and that they possessed sacred writings, which they valued, and by the rule of which they lived. It seems not unlikely that the story of the renegade Proteus Peregrinus may have been a witty satire of Lucian's on the martyrdom of Polycarp; but the evidence remains unshaken, and Lucian brings no charge of any kind against the Christians, except their simplicity and guilelessness. Such a man could not have so written had not Christianity been widely diffused at the time, and had not the Scriptures been in general use among the Christians.

We may place beside this evidence of the heathen writer that of the Christian bishop and martyr of Antioch, *Ignatius* (about A.D. 120; some say he was martyred under Trojan, A.D. 115), whose writings still, in part, remain. It is thought by some that Lucian knew them, and refers to them in writing of Peregrinus. There are several epistles which bear his name which are much doubted, and the controversy as to the genuineness of all is continued as yet without decisive settlement; but three at least are admitted by most critics. Dr. Lightfoot dates them A.D. 107 to 115. A Greek collection of seven, called "Vossian," is also admitted to be genuine by many. It dates from the middle of the second century. *Ignatius* certainly bears witness to the existence of Christians in Asia, and to the facts of Christianity. There are few quotations of any sort in his writings; but such as there are point to the use of our Gospels and of the Old Testament at the beginning of the second century. Taken in connection with the other writings of what are called

the apostolical fathers, Polycarp, Clement of Rome, Hermas, and others, we find a very distinct testimony, going back into the first century, to the principal facts of the Gospels, and to the existence of the Christian Church, as well as to the use of the Old Testament Scriptures among the Christians.

3. At the end of the first century there was a Christian Church spread through Western Asia, North Africa, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and France. The Christians of these countries read the four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul. These Christian writings bear witness to the truth of the facts on which Christianity is founded. It is an undisputed fact that there were false Gospels in existence, and that there were writings which were put forth in the names of apostles. But they were not received by the Christian people generally. There is nothing which can be regarded as part of the false Gospels to be found in those which we now receive, and which we know were received in the second century. Even when the four Gospels are not mentioned, the substance of them is confirmed in writers of that time. The representation of the character and teaching of Jesus Christ is in accordance with that in the New Testament. As already observed in another place, there is abundant evidence of the observance of the two ordinances of the Christian Church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. In baptism a confession of faith was made which included faith in the Divine character and mission of Jesus Christ. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper pointed solemnly to the facts on which Christianity rests—the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension, as well as to the continued existence of the Christian Church. "It would have been in the highest degree difficult," says Prebendary Row (in his "Bampton Lectures," lect. v.), "not to say impossible, during the brief interval between our Lord's ministry and the end of the first century, to have imposed

on any community of Christians a mass of legendary matter of a character wholly different from those facts on the belief in which the Church was originally founded, and which formed the moving spring of the daily life of the individual members, and which many of them had accepted as the ground of their conversion. It is absolutely impossible that communities like the Churches of the first century, living in a state of constant antagonism to their Jewish and pagan neighbours, and having to justify to themselves the grounds on which they had abandoned their former beliefs, could have become oblivious of those facts which had induced them to accept Jesus as the Messiah, and which had ever since formed the foundation of their religious life." The theories which have been put forth by such men as Strauss in Germany, and Renan in France, which would remove from the beginning of Christianity all the supernatural elements and leave nothing but the superior wisdom and high moral and spiritual character of Jesus Christ, will not bear examination in view of indisputable facts. It would then be necessary to assume that the apostles and their contemporaries inserted such miraculous facts into the Gospels. But if they did so it was either because they themselves were deceived or because they desired to deceive others. The existence and growth of the Christian Church in the first century, when it was comparatively free from error and corruption, and when it was opposed by Jews and pagans alike, cannot be explained on any other supposition than the sincerity and truthfulness of the first disciples. This is abundantly proved by Archdeacon Paley in his "Evidences of Christianity." Taking the Epistles of St. Paul as evidence of the kind of faith which was put in Christ and urged upon mankind by Christian teachers, what do we find in them? We find that when the apostle is writing to those who believed in his authority he says very little about miracles, because

he knew that they were believed in by those to whom he wrote; but when he is meeting the objections and doubts of those who opposed him he boldly appeals to miracles. He was not the kind of man to be deceived. He had been an open and avowed enemy of the Christians, and it was on the ground of a miraculous appearance of the risen Saviour that he stood as a believer in that gospel which once he sought to destroy. Would not the Jewish nation have gladly silenced the apostle Paul, had they been able to do so? Yet they never attempted to answer him; and his Epistles remain, most of them undoubtedly genuine, even though some few be still disputed by the critics, proving, with the utmost clearness, that, at the time when he wrote—that is, about thirty years after the death of Jesus Christ—the principal facts of the gospel were well known and accredited everywhere. It will not be necessary here to repeat what has been said of the facts of the Resurrection. That is the corner-stone of apostolic belief. It is the principal miracle recorded, and as such carries with it the verification of others which are closely connected with it. No one can deny that about the middle of the first century, not only apostles but Christians generally, over a vast extent of the world, believed in the Resurrection. The worship of the Church was identified with it. The first day of the week was observed as a commemoration of it. The whole structure of the Christian society rested upon it as a basis. Moreover, it is easy to trace the belief to Jerusalem, where the event occurred. It was not an idea which arose in the mind of a writer far off from the scene; nor was it a myth or legend which grew up gradually as time removed the facts further and further away. It was the belief with which the disciples started in the work of the Christian Church before the conversion of St. Paul. And the narrative shows clearly that it was no hallucination or deliberate invention, for it took the

disciples by surprise. They believed not at first, and only the irresistible force of the evidence removed their doubts. Thus the credentials of Christianity, which are derived from the Christian Church itself, are sound historical proof. We may fairly challenge the unbeliever to give any account of the existence of the Church which can be reconciled with any other statement of the facts. It is impossible to believe that a religion which is so superhuman in its character and so wonderful in its history originated in delusion and fraud. We are bound to accept the writings of the apostles and evangelists as describing the true beginning of Christianity until they are proved to be false, which they never have been and never will be.

The Credentials of Christianity as the Religion of the Christian Man.

We may put aside all ancient documents, and all speculative difficulties, and consider facts which come under our own observation, or which are matter of acknowledged, world-wide evidence. There is Christianity not only in books but in men. The credentials of the religion may be sought in *personal character and personal history*. We will very briefly indicate some of the heads of this argument from the practical effects of the truth in heart and life.

1. *A Christian man*, that is, one who reflects in his character and actions the teaching of Christianity, *is morally and spiritually higher than any other.* Apart from all religion, we have reason to believe that there can be no moral goodness maintained in man generally; and looking at the religions which have existed and do still exist, there is no comparison between their practical influence and that of Christianity. This is admitted by men of the highest intellectual power. Mr. *John Stuart*

Mill has said that "it would not be easy for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." That is the rule of the Christian. Mr. *W. E. H. Lecky* makes a similar admission: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting in all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice; and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and than all the exhortations of moralists. This indeed has been the well-spring of whatever has been best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft, the persecution and fanaticism which have defaced the Church, it has preserved, in the character and example of its Founder, an enduring principle of regeneration." That Christian character and life have been the fruit of the gospel ever since the time of Christ cannot be denied. The change which is called *Conversion*, and which is so named in the New Testament, is witnessed among living men and women. It is very wonderful, and cannot be explained by any common laws of human thought and feeling. It is produced, so far as the means which we can employ are concerned, by the simple, earnest, and affectionate preaching of the gospel, especially by setting Christ Himself before the soul. With all the imperfections of Christians there is reality in the practical religion which they profess. They do, in innumerable instances, deny themselves for others; live unspotted from the world; control their passions and temper; seek after

the higher things of God; and try to follow the rules which their Saviour has laid down for them. The same gospel is carried out into heathen lands and produces marvellous effects there, delivering men from their superstitions; lifting them out of physical and moral degradation; putting them on the way of advancement and social amelioration; and changing them from enemies of one another to become messengers of peace and good will to one another. It has been remarked by Professor Vinet, that "the Christian religion, like all other beliefs, renders homage to a want of the human soul, and—what no other belief has yet done—that it has satisfied this want; it has an *intensity*, a *generality* of *application*, an *elevation* of *tendency*, and, in fine, a *certainty* which no other possesses; in all these respects it presents a type of perfection which has never been realized in any human invention: and if God Himself has given a faith to the world, it is impossible that He should have given a better in any respects. After this it would appear quite superfluous to inquire if the Christian religion is true. This proof is sufficient." Now there are teachers in our times, who maintain that there is no need of a religion like Christianity in order to produce great moral changes, both in individuals and in society—teachers such as Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Frederick Harrison, and some of the continental theorists. But they fail to show that any such views as they represent could be preached *as a gospel*, whereby the masses could be lifted up. They talk of *ideas*, as though they could touch the heart. Experience shows that the preaching of *morality without religion* is powerless. It may help those that are well trained and disciplined to be steadfast to their principles, but it cannot heal the wounded conscience and recover the fallen out of their misery. Men may be æsthetically cultured, highly civilized, touched with sentiments of courtesy and gentleness, "sweetness and light;" but there

is something deeper and larger than these things required for the hard conflicts of daily life. Nothing but the power of Love, the Love of God, can overcome the evil of the human heart. And there is no religion and no moral system where Love is the ruling principle, except Christianity. The speculations and dreams of mere thinkers may please the fancy, but they cannot redeem the soul.

2. We may seek the credentials of Christianity, again, in *the testimonies of eminent saints.* It will not be necessary to enumerate many of these, but a few may be recalled to the reader's recollection. The life and labours of the apostle Paul have often been referred to as sealing the truth of the gospel. Two young men imbued with sceptical opinions agreed together to write each a learned attack upon some portion of Christianity. One selected the Resurrection as his subject, the other the conversion and character of St. Paul. Both were convinced of their errors by their studies. Gilbert West wrote an able book on the Resurrection; Lord Lyttleton his "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul," in which he shows that such a character could not have been formed upon any other foundation than fact and verity. There are many such in the early Church, "men who hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and "of whom the world was not worthy." We must expect, of course, that the peculiar features of the Christianity of the Catholic Church should in some instances remove such men from ourselves in some respects, but no such differences can hide from us most distinguished moral features — heroic self-devotion and unworldliness, and, in many cases, simplicity and purity almost supernatural. *Patrick* (born A.D. 372 in the village of Bonvola, now Kilpatrick, near Glasgow) was converted to God in his seventeenth year. He was carried away by pirates, and sold into the service of a Scottish chief,

who employed him as a herdsman. Trouble led his heart to God. "God opened," he says, "my unbelieving mind so that, although late, I thought of my sins and turned with my whole heart to the Lord my God, to Him who looked down on my low condition, had pity on my youth and ignorance, and before I knew Him, before I could distinguish between good and evil, guarded, protected, and cherished me as a father his son." He became very devout and prayerful. After many sufferings he gave himself up to be a preacher of the gospel to the semi-barbarous Irish, in A.D. 431. He was opposed by the priests and national bards, but "he conquered by steadfastness of faith, by glowing zeal, and by the attractive power of love." He was the means of multitudes turning to God, and lived a simple, abstemious, self-denying life of a missionary. There were others of a very similar character to Patrick, who showed by their devotedness that there was power in Christianity to exalt human nature to the highest efforts and sacrifices; such as Gallus the apostle of Switzerland, Boniface the apostle of the Germans, Gregory the abbot of Utrecht, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Xavier and others who, while they had less enlightenment than some who lived in the times when Roman error was thrown off, still were under the influence of Christian motives, and displayed wonderful energy and self-forgetfulness in the work of preaching. When we come to the times of the Reformation we are in the midst of moral greatness and spiritual heroism. *Martin Luther* himself was a character such as nothing but Christianity could have produced. His love of truth, his confidence in God, his unselfishness, his mingled strength and affectionateness, his purity and unworldliness, all testify to the Divine worth of the religion whose champion he was. The Reformers were all very Luther-like men, almost without exception. Their faults were due either to ordinary human infirmity or to the imperfect knowledge and

culture of their age. Their Christianity was not eclipsed by their imperfections. It lifted them to a very great height of moral attainment and excellence. *John Bunyan*, author of the "Pilgrim's Progress," is another conspicuous instance of Divine grace which testifies to the truth of the religion in which he believed. He was rescued from a life of immorality and blasphemy, and became a preacher of the gospel. He suffered imprisonment for conscience' sake for twelve years, and not only endured patiently the persecutions and wrongs of enemies, but sent forth out of his prison the book which has flowed like a stream of living water ever since, reviving and refreshing multitudes, and helping them on their way to a better world. During the eighteenth century there were many remarkable instances of religious character, such as bear powerful witness to Christianity, particularly in connection with the rise of Methodism in England and the contemporary work which went on in Germany and America. Wesley, Whitefield, Fletcher of Madeley, the Countess of Huntingdon, Count Zinzendorf, Brainerd, John Howard, and others like them, were eminent examples of devotion and philanthropy which illustrate the power of the Christian religion. Immediately after the work of spiritual revival which awoke the Christian Church to feel its responsibility, commenced the efforts of modern Protestant missions, both in foreign lands and in the dense populations of our own country. It is impossible to think of such lives as have been lived during the last hundred years by missionaries and evangelists and not acknowledge that Christian men bear witness to Christianity.

3. But the great practical test of a religion is its adaptation to the wants of man in *the time of trouble*, and its power *to triumph over death*. In both these respects there is no comparison between Christianity and other religions, and between faith and unbelief. We can appeal to the language of the Bible, which, as adapted to soothe and

comfort, is incomparably superior to all other words of man's. We can point to the instances of the martyrs, and those who through faith obtained the victory over personal suffering and the fear of death. While it cannot be denied that heroism has been witnessed apart from Christianity;—as, among the heathen, in the case of Socrates dying calmly as a philosopher, and in many other cases, where wonderful moral courage was manifested and great endurance in suffering; and among those who cannot be said to have derived their strength from religious feeling, as in many cases of noble self-devotion in the battle-field, in the struggle of daily life, in circumstances of extreme danger such as shipwreck and other sudden calamities, in the endurance of pain and in facing distress and death;—still it must be remembered that what Christianity claims to be able to do is to raise *humanity itself* out of weakness into strength, and out of the misery of sin into peace and victory over self. The testimonies which may be gathered from Christians are not exceptional and rare, but common and almost universal. The weak are made strong, the fearful are made courageous, the sufferers are made patient, and the dying are victorious over natural feelings, by their faith in Jesus Christ. "Soon after the American war broke out," says Mr. Moody, the great evangelist, "it pleased God to call me to work among the wounded and dying. There I saw plenty of death! And now I know there is a difference between the latter end of the righteous and the sinner. I have heard screams of despair from those who were without hope. And I have also witnessed scenes of calm, placid death, even of joyous triumphant departure to be with Christ, on the part of those who had their feet on the Rock of Ages. And now I tell you there is a difference, a great difference, as much difference as between day and night, or as between light and darkness." Every Christian minister will testify that there is this difference. While all death-beds of believers are not

scenes of triumph, *none* are scenes of despair and terror, or sullen indifference and hard-heartedness. On the other hand, without faith in Christ trouble is apt to destroy the higher qualities of the soul, to produce evil in the temper and in the life, and to become a curse instead of, as it may be, a blessing in disguise.

What Christianity is to the World.

This subject requires a separate treatment because it is brought out into special prominence by the questions and tendencies of our time. The adaptation of a religion to the wants of an individual man may be admitted, and yet it may be regarded as unsocial in its character. There have been times when Christianity *seemed* to stand in the way of human progress, as a whole. There are some who bring the same charge against it now. They openly teach that to shut up Christian churches and to destroy their institutions would be to facilitate and accelerate the advancement of the human race, in knowledge and power and happiness. As to the testimony of the past, it must be remembered that the forms which Christianity has taken, at different times, have been largely the outcome of the state of the world. The corruptions of society have influenced the minds of religious men. They have erred, often, in their methods; but their errors have not been derived from Christ, but from those who misunderstood Christ, or from the influence of surrounding circumstances. The Church of Rome is no true representative of Christianity. No Church, as a visible institution, can be taken as exactly reflecting the doctrine of Christ. And yet, with all allowances for past errors, it may be said that modern European society owes many of its best and most stable features to the religious elements which have been mingled with it. The historical proofs must be sought in their proper place.

The reader will not expect them here. But a few leading considerations will be a help to his studies.

1. *Christianity has been and still is a great power of civilization.* By civilization we do not mean the mere accumulation of wealth, or the multiplication of the means of material enjoyment, or mere superficial refinement of manners; but the development of the true idea of society, that is, of the world as a community of families, and nations, holding free and orderly intercourse with one another and exchanging benefits, as their power of production and general capacity grows. It must be acknowledged that all true civilization rests upon law; all law must rest ultimately on the will of God. Christianity, as the highest revelation both of the character and will of God, supplies a firm foundation for the law of society to rest upon. Where there is no acknowledgment of the Divine authority, there individualism becomes rampant and society falls to pieces. It has been said by Atheists that there is enough protection against the evil tendencies at work in society, in the forces of human nature and in the laws of the material universe. But such a crisis as the French Revolution shows that without religion the forces at work become chaotic, and the chaos is destructive. What we look for in society is a union of liberty with law: progress regulated by restraints and by principles which are beneficent and salutary. Now, the power of Christianity is to elevate the individual, mentally and morally, so that he becomes every way a stronger and better man; and at the same time it elevates society by giving a common aim and rule to the whole community. Compare Christianity in this respect with Mohammedanism. We see in the history of the false prophet how the liberty of the individual was sacrificed to the fanaticism of the zealot, how fatalism took the place of an intelligent purpose in life, and the masses of people were held in bondage by the despotism of mere physical power, the power of the sword

But Christianity is a religion of love, and therefore of peace and good will, liberty and order. Compare the history of Christendom, again, with the history of any heathen people—such as, in ancient times, Assyria or Egypt; or, in modern times, the Hindoos or Chinese. We find in Christendom there is a decided moral advancement, so that errors and prejudice are being cast out, and that, just in proportion to the sway of Christianity; whereas, in heathen countries, while some improvements may be derived from contact with other nations, *moral progress* is not maintained, rather the rooted evils increase. The ancient empires were destroyed much more by their internal corruption than by attacks from external enemies. They had no moral strength, because their religions were mere degraded superstitions which undermined the virtue and fed the passions of the multitude. The heathen world, at the present time, is a mass of moral filth and misery; and the only hope of its recovery is in the influence of Christianity.

There are two forces which are recognized as holding a prominent place in modern civilized society; they are *Science* and *Art*. To a large extent it may be admitted, these two forces are changing the aspect of the world, so far as the present life is concerned. Are they independent of Christianity? They certainly have not been so in past ages. *Science* may be said to be the distinct outcome of that awakening of the European mind in the sixteenth century which was due almost entirely to the influence of Christianity. It was the stirring of deep religious thoughts which broke the slumber of the Middle Ages. It was by the moral and spiritual force let loose by the controversies of the Reformation, and the international conflicts which accompanied them, that Europe was lifted up to a higher level of activity and enterprise, out of which came the achievements of modern times. *Art* was pre-eminently the child of Religion, of the Christian Religion; and even in

Greece, of the religious impulse which, in the best natures, sought after an expression above the mere groping of heathenish ignorance and deformity. At the present time, notwithstanding the sad alienation of many scientific and æsthetic minds from the gospel of Christ, which, it may be hoped, is only temporary, this progress of science and art is dependent upon the progress of society generally, and that is the fruit of Christianity. The greatest stimulus which has been given to the cultivation, both of scientific observation and of artistic capacity, has come from men who were Christian in their faith, and who were animated by that fervent philanthropy which never can long exist except in the clear daylight and genial atmosphere of Christian society.

2. *Christianity is especially adapted to meet and remedy the evils which are found in the world.* This is a subject much dwelt upon; there is no need to enter into it, in detail. The instance of the abolition of *slavery* is very much in point. Slavery was an evil which had grown up in the world partly from the decay of nations and partly from the struggle for supremacy due to the growth of power in the race. The root of it, however, was in the selfishness and cruelty of the fallen nature of man. Christianity did not deal with it politically: did not charge its followers to preach against the institution or custom. But the evil, as being chiefly a moral evil, was destroyed by moral forces. Humanity was itself elevated by Christ. The slave was a man and a brother. The blow which Christianity gave to slavery was an internal blow. It smote it in the vitals. The evil has been cast out of the world, not by the stirring up of a Christian crusade against it, but by the growth of the Christian spirit among the nations. Another instance is the change effected *in the condition of women* and in the *family life.* Both in the Old and in the New Testaments woman is honoured, and the affections of family life carefully shielded from the dangers to which they are exposed in the

confusions of the world. It is impossible to read the writings of heathen antiquity, or to look into heathen society in the East at the present day, and not recognize the debt which the world owes to the Bible. Woman has never taken her proper place under any other religious system than the Christian. Even the Roman matron in the best times of the Republic was not what the Christian lady is. And we know that in Rome vice prevailed so fearfully when the stricter and simpler life of early times had given way to luxury and superstition, that the female character became degraded to the lowest point. In Eastern countries woman has no position which can be regarded as better than slavery and misery. In heathen nations the destruction of infant life has been utterly reckless and cruel beyond all description. The children there are property at the disposal of the possessors; Christianity rescued the little ones out of the hands of arbitrary and selfish parents, and placed them under the protection of the Saviour. There is no teaching which can be compared with that of the Bible as a counteraction of the sensual corruption of all mankind. The sanctification of the body ("Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" 1 Cor. xi. 19), the love of neighbours as ourselves, the prospect of judgment, the presence of Jesus Christ with us at every moment and the consecration of all our nature to Him; such are some of the doctrines of Christianity which tend to preserve Christians from falling into sensuality. And it was not only the abstract teaching of the Bible which promoted purity of life, but the practical working of the truth in the Christian community. Each individual Christian became a watchful guardian over his brother's consistency; and, at the same time, the strength derived from fellowship acted as a moral support to the weak and the tempted. It is also important to notice that the moral force of Christianity is not a merely negative force, prohibiting and restraining; it is a positive force,

renewing the nature, and therefore giving men the power to throw off the evil by the growth of the good. This we can see very abundantly illustrated in the work of Christianity among the young. Those that are trained under Christian influences are not only saved from contact with the contaminating corruption, but develop a higher and purer life in the higher and purer atmosphere, so that they are doubly protected, both by the possession of positive good and the separation from outer evil. It is well to notice, in connection with this moral working of Christianity, the fact that society is leavened with the force of living men and women, united to Christ and deriving their strength from Him, and formed into bands of energetic labourers in the Saviour's name. No mere body of principles and precepts would suffice to convert the world. There must be the contact of life with life, the enforcement of the doctrine by the example. There is nothing which can be compared with the Christian Church in any heathen system. Philosophy has put forth many beautiful sentiments and wise sayings. But what is wanted for the world at large is a living community which spreads, as the Christian Church has spread, from nation to nation, from family to family, until it embraces all and lifts up all.

Another prevalent evil in humanity has been *War*. It has sprung, not from evil passions of mankind alone, but also from their errors, misunderstandings, false views of right and wrong, impatience and distrust of one another. Christianity is not responsible for any of the wars which have been waged, although they have often been waged in the name and professedly for the glory of Christ. The normal influence of the doctrine of the Saviour is to put an end to war. It must do so in the last result. The prediction which coincides with the ultimate triumph of the gospel is that of permanent peace. The spirit of Christianity is that of wise forbearance of one another and confidence

in God. It tends towards the end of strife and the reign of Justice.

Lastly, it is the special distinction of Christianity that *it provides for the poor, protects the weak, and champions the cause of the suffering and oppressed.* The evils which lie at the base of society are to some extent inevitable, as the result of the increase of population and prosperity. In a great workshop there is sure to be a large amount of material which appears like refuse, which falls away from the finished products, and is apt to be treated as worthless. In the economy of nature there is no waste, nothing is lost, everything is transformed into some new shape. But in human society it is different. The prosperous are tempted to trample on the rights of the poor. The weak ones go to the wall. The lagging ones are left behind in the race. Heathen religions taught no doctrine of the conservation of human life. Philosophy left the problem unsolved, what to do with the refuse of society. Christianity comes in with its wonderful new creating power and brings back the lost, reclaims the fallen, restores the forsaken to their place—by the ministry of love and self-denial which it both inculcates and maintains. Many who hold aloof from Christ loudly proclaim their patriotism, their philanthropy, their charity; but the true examples of such virtues must be sought, not in the ranks of infidelity or scepticism, but in the annals of the Christian Church.

3. *Christianity teaches universal brotherhood, and proclaims the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.* There are three unities which all thoughtful men recognize—the unity of the family relationship, the unity of the nation, and the unity of the race. There have been many influences which have appeared among mankind, promoting these unities, separately and in part. But there has been no one system, either of religion or philosophy, which may be said to promote them all at once. Patriotism was a virtue in ancient

times, but it meant the love of our own nation and the hatred of others. There is a spurious universalism which is much talked of among the positivists of our day. And human interests themselves tend to preserve the unity of the fleshly bond. But the difficulty is to combine in one system that which will strengthen the tie of family relationship and the love of kindred, and yet enlarge the circle of our affections so that we can cherish an "*enthusiasm of humanity*." It has been often remarked that when the Roman Empire absorbed the kingdoms of the earth into itself by conquest, it did much to widen the thoughts of men, and to promote the order of their life for a time, but it was at the cost of some of the finest sentiments of the human heart. Christians themselves could not inculcate anything better than quiet submission to the despotism of the Empire. There was no political life, no freedom, no patriotism possible, until that deadly uniformity was broken up. But when Europe became again the scene of national life, Christianity helped men to be true to it, and to defend it bravely. Then, as national life, again, began to lessen its claim on the interests of men, and the discoveries of modern times brought the ends of the earth nearer to one another, the fundamental conception of Christianity came out more and more clearly to view, and the Christian Church rose to it, and endeavoured to realize it practically. It must never be forgotten that the principle which lies on the very forefront of Christianity is the universal brotherhood of man. It is proclaimed as an indisputable truth, because it springs out of the Fatherhood of God. The Church of Christ must be catholic, universal, or it is nothing. "There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28). The teaching of the New Testament lies at the foundation of all practical efforts to convert the world. It aims to bind all men together in the one bond of Christian fellowship, as a family, of

which God is the Father and Jesus Christ is the Elder Brother and Head. The fact is before us in the modern world, *Christianity redeeming the race;* not only caring for all but saving all. When we compare with the missionary zeal of Christians, the pride and exclusiveness of heathen systems, and the helplessness of mere philosophy, in the ancient world, we see how much the world owes to Christ. In the communities of the ages preceding Christianity there was natural humanity, to some extent, but it was crushed out by the evil working of forces which were developed by the customs of the world, and which met with no counteraction. "Inveterate feuds and narrow-minded local jealousies, arising out of an isolated position, or differences of language and institutions, had created endless divisions between man and man. Selfishness was not a mere abuse, or corruption arising out the infirmity of human nature, but a theory and almost a part of moral philosophy. Humanity was cramped by a mistaken prejudice, by a perverse presumption of intellect" ("Ecce Homo," p. 160). "That Christ's method, when rightly applied, is really of mighty force may be shown by an argument which the severest censor of Christianity will hardy refuse to admit. Compare the ancient with the modern world: 'Look on this picture and on that.' One broad distinction in the characters of men forces itself into prominence. Among all the men of the heathen world there were scarcely one or two to whom we might venture to apply the epithet 'holy.' In other words, there were not more than one or two, if any, who, besides being virtuous in their actions, were possessed with an unaffected enthusiasm of goodness, and besides abstaining from vice, regarded even a vicious thought with horror. Probably no one will deny that in Christian countries this higher-toned goodness, which we call holiness, has existed. Few will maintain that it has been exceedingly rare. Perhaps the truth is, that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country, since

the time of Christ, where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself. And if this be so, has Christ failed? or can Christianity die?" ("Ecce Homo," p. 171). The mere speculations and dreams of socialists and political enthusiasts fail to affect humanity at large. There is no true centre from which the labourers on behalf of the world can be sent forth; except that one inexhaustible source of renovating influences and living energy, the person of Jesus Christ. He is represented by a continuously increasing number of disciples. His promise goes before them and Hope lights up their path. "Their labour is not in vain in the Lord." Those who take account of the triumphs of Christianity during the past century, and the prospects of its yet larger triumphs in the near future, will be ready to say with the zealous apostle, when he thought of visiting the great metropolis of the ancient world and planting the standard of the Cross on the very palace of the Cæsars, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.*"

How Christian Evidences should be studied.

We have now completed the brief outline of Christian Evidence which it is the aim of this primer to place before the reader. But there are a few remarks which it is desirable yet to make, for the guidance of those who take up a small work of this kind and might be disposed to complain of its leaving so many difficult questions untouched.

We must distinguish between a speculative and a practical spirit, in the study of evidence. If Christianity came to us as a body of abstract truth, such as we find, *e.g.*, in the writings of a philosopher, or in the work of a scientific theorist, we might then examine the evidence on

the simple ground of its relation to the particular truths in question, and if they were not proved to our satisfaction, we should then lay aside the book as possessing no more special interest to our minds. But it must be carefully remembered that there is a foundation of *universal beliefs* on which the particular doctrines of Christianity are built up. And they are intimately connected with the common life of man.

Christianity takes for granted our relation to God as His creatures. It does not come to us as a revelation of what we instinctively believe. It does not profess to prove our moral obligations and our future existence. But addresses itself to those who know and feel that they are weak and miserable and guilty in the sight of God.

The practical need of a religion such as is set before us in the Bible is the one strong support on which all evidences rest. To one who is utterly indifferent to all religion, such a subject will be repulsive, and it will be labour spent in vain to endeavour to show that it makes a claim upon his rational assent. But if there be in the mind a sense of the need and value of a strong conviction, a desire to obtain such a conviction, then a thoughtful review of the whole region of evidence will help the heart to cast itself more entirely on the truth and to stand more firmly against the assaults of doubt.

There are questions, more particularly critical questions, such as those which concern the authority of some of the books in the Bible, which are very difficult to determine. The evidence which has to be weighed is of a very subtle kind, some of it surrounded with uncertainty because it deals with matters of remote antiquity, and with writings which have been left in a very unsatisfactory state, having passed through many hands.

But while we may see that such points are not as strongly defended as others, it should be borne in mind that they are not vital points; and that they do not in-

volve, if taken by the enemy, the surrender of vital points. Attacks are made on portions of the Old Testament which are said by some modern critics to be of much later date than we have been accustomed to believe. But the substance of Christianity is not touched by any such speculative questions.

Again, there may be interpretations of Scripture to which the great majority of Christians have given in their adhesion which hereafter may prove to be erroneous. But that will not invalidate the main features of the New Testament revelation. There may be modifications needful in the form of particular doctrines, but that will not disprove the reality of the facts on which our faith stands. With a decided practical aim in view, earnestly desiring to have a full assurance of faith unto salvation, it will be found that the study of Christian evidences enables us to "give a reason of the hope that is in us."

Another guiding maxim which we would urge upon the reader to keep in mind is to distinguish, in subjects of this kind, *moral certainty* from *scientific demonstration.* The point to be reached is not the exclusion of all possible doubt, but the duty of faith, and of the practice which springs from it. A mathematical theorem is proved to demonstration. The premisses being granted, no reasonable being, capable of understanding the argument, will resist the conclusion. So in scientific proof, the evidence is referred to fixed principles. It is the mere application of laws which are already ascertained. There is a department of Science where demonstration is *not* perfect—what is called speculative science; as *e.g.* the principle of evolution, as explanatory of the material universe. In such instances there is the accumulation of evidence in support of a theory which may make it more or less reasonable, but there can be no actual *demonstration.*

Now, the truths of Christianity appeal to our moral nature. The facts upon which they rest are facts of history,

and therefore depend upon moral evidence. They cannot be proved with mathematical evidence. But in this respect they are only like all the truths and facts which move our life. We are absolutely certain of nothing, except of elementary ideas, which, as elementary ideas, have no practical meaning. The moment we begin to apply them to the realities of our own life, then the possibility of doubt comes in. That two and two make four we cannot doubt, because to doubt it would be to contradict ourselves, our elementary ideas; but that two persons came out of one room into another, and joined two others, making four in all, is a question of fact, about which we cannot be *absolutely certain.* We can examine the evidence, and the evidence may make us *morally convinced.* We act upon the *moral certainty.* So in the case of religious truth. It can be so far proved that doubt becomes irrational, and an immoral resistance of the evidence. But it *may* be doubted, not because the conclusion does not properly follow from the premisses, but because the premisses are not sufficiently well weighed and the reasoning is not clearly grasped. Hence the importance of the study of Christian evidences. It enables us to feel the moral force of the appeal Christianity makes—"*How can we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*"

The evidences of our religion are often described as External and Internal. By *External evidences* are intended those which concern the facts and documents, apart from the doctrines which they teach and the influence which they exercise; by *Internal evidences*, those which are derived from the religion itself, such as the moral worth of the doctrines, their consistency with the facts and with one another, the spiritual life as proceeding from them, the adaptation of the truth to the hearts and to the wants of men, and many other subjects of a similar nature. Now, it is important to remember that these two kinds of evidence meet and support one another. They are mutually com-

plementary. To some the internal evidence will be far more satisfactory than any amount of argument about authenticity and external authority. But with others, whose minds are unprepared to weigh the force of an appeal to the deeper instincts of the soul, it may be necessary to begin with the proof of facts and the genuineness of writings.

At the same time, the recommendation to the reader is, to open his mind to both kinds of argument; and especially to keep in view the practical nature of the study upon which he enters. If a book of the Bible is being examined, it is a most desirable thing that we should not content ourselves with a mere critical inquiry into the arguments for its date, authorship, and place in Scripture, but that we study the matter of the book itself. Difficulties of language and form may be often seen to be very much smaller than they appeared at first, when they are viewed in the light of the truth taught and the spiritual value of the whole work. A cursory examination of critical objections to such a book, *e.g.*, as Jonah in the Old Testament, may shake belief in its authority, but a thoughtful and earnest study of the practical meaning and aim of the book, will show that it not only has Divine authority, but holds one of the most important places in Scripture, which is borne out by the pointed reference to it in our Lord's discourses. We must read the Bible, not in the spirit of a disputant, but in the spirit of one who is seeking first and most for truth unto salvation; then the external evidences will be like the wall around the city, and the internal evidences will be like the treasures that are contained within those walls, which by their inestimable value compel us to hold them fast

We will now conclude this primer with a few practical suggestions, for the guidance of those who are students of the evidences.

I. Let us suppose the reader to be one of *limited opportunities* of study, and unprepared for any *prolonged intellectual effort.* A plan of progressive study may be useful to such.

The first thing necessary is to obtain a clear conception of the nature of the arguments for Christianity. It should be understood that a great deal which is objected to the teaching of the Bible would be equally an objection to any religion. *The existence of God* should be regarded as a subject quite distinct from *the claims of Christianity.* As it is difficult for one who is untrained in argument to deal with such a subject without some preparatory study, we should recommend that the *Theistic* portion of the argument be deferred.

The three most easily comprehended departments of Christian evidence are *the evidence for The authority of Scripture*, that for *The truth and faithfulness of the Gospels*, and that for *The adaptation of Christianity to the wants of humanity.*

Let the reader distinctly set before him what the questions are which he must be prepared, as far as possible, to answer. As *e.g.* with reference to Scripture—How do we know that the books which are now collected together in the Bible were written by those whose names are attached to them? How do we know that they who wrote them were writing with Divine authority? How do we know that in the course of transmission the words have not been materially changed?

We should recommend on such a subject a careful study of such a work as Dr. Angus's "Handbook of the Bible."

As to the Gospels, the two principal subjects to be dealt with are—(i.) *The evidence for the date of the narratives.* This may be gathered from almost any work on Christian evidences, as that by Dr. Kennedy, "The Gospels: their Age and Authorship" (price, 75 c.), or the same author's

"Popular Handbook," part ii., "Christianity." (ii.) *The evidence for the miracles.* The subject of miracles can be studied in the works of Prebendary Row—"The Jesus of the Gospels," "The Supernatural in the New Testament;" also in the works of Dr. Kennedy—"Popular Handbook," parts i. and ii.

But we cannot recommend the untrained reader to spend much time on large works on miracles, as the *possibility* of the miraculous is not now denied by the best thinkers of the sceptical school. The question, therefore, resolves itself into one of the trustworthiness of the Gospels.

The adaptation of Christianity to man is perhaps best considered *historically.* A brief account of the progress and triumph of the gospel in the first three centuries prepares the mind for dealing with the objections of such men as the German Strauss and the French Renan. Let the reader *grasp the leading argument.* The triumph of the gospel was due to its *inherent power.* It was not assisted by external circumstances.

The little work by Thomas Cooper, "The Bridge of History over the Gulf of Time" (12mo), forms a suitable introduction to the historical argument.

When the *facts* are studied, then advance to the *principles.* Endeavour to distinguish the leading features of Christianity in its practical application to the spiritual wants of men: the answers which it gives to the questions of the conscience, of the individual life, of the destiny of the world at large. Compare the characteristics of Christianity with those of other religions—as *e.g.* its Monotheism with the Polytheistic systems, its spirituality with their superstition, its records with their sacred books, its influence upon its adherents with the state of the heathen world.

We should recommend the mastery of some *Outline of the subject of evidences;* and then the selection of a *particular branch* on which to read more fully; the argument for Theism being postponed to the last.

II. We will now suppose that the reader is prepared to give close and diligent study to a course of works on evidences, and that he is able to grapple with the more difficult questions. Let him, in that case, after the perusal of some simple outline, like the present primer, then arrange his studies, according to the amount of time he is able to devote to them, on the principle of *a consecutive line of argument.*

(i.) *There is a God whom man can know and worship.* The subject of *Theism* is a very vast one, but a few leading works are quite sufficient to place the reader in possession of the *main arguments*—Dr. Kennedy's "Popular Handbook," part i.; "The Christian's Plea against Modern Unbelief," part ii.; Conder's "Basis of Faith;" Flint's "Theism and Anti-theistic Theories."

(ii.) *There is a revelation of God to man.* This should be made a principal subject. Study the *Nature of revelation;* the *Mode and Method* in which the revelation must be made; the argument for the *Canonical authority* of the Old and New Testaments; the evidence for the truth of Scripture in the *Fulfilment of prophecy*; the theories of *Modern Critics*, such as the mythical theory of Strauss; the attacks made on the Gospels and Acts by such a writer as the author of "Supernatural Religion."

It will be evident that the demand made by these subjects is great, both upon time and thought. But if the guidance of a good Handbook is followed, it will be possible to combine with it the study of many volumes which take up particular branches of the evidence without burdening the mind too much. Prebendary Row's "Bampton Lectures," and the Rev. G. B. Johnson's little work, "The Bible: its Structure and Development" and also the works of Canon Westcott, on the "Canon of Scripture," or any other similar books, will furnish the student with the principal *details of the argument.* It is a good method, however, to select *some one branch*, such as

Prophecy, or Miracles, and read extensively, for a time, upon that alone. It will prepare the mind for mastering the subtler difficulties in all branches.

(iii.) *The history of Christianity, and of the attacks which have been made upon it, prove it Divine.* It should be the aim of the student to become thoroughly acquainted with

(1) The facts of the first century of Christianity;

(2) The proofs to be derived from the writings of the second century of the authority of Christianity;

(3) The history of unbelief from the beginning;

(4) The present attitude of the opponents of our religion.

The books already referred to will furnish the outlines. Farrar's "Critical History of Free Thought" is a valuable help to understand the conflicts of the past. The press teems with publications meeting modern attacks upon the Christian positions.

It is well, however, to concentrate attention on two points —*The objections of the scientific school to the supernatural in the Bible*, and *The claim of natural religion to be regarded as on a level with revealed religion;* in other words, the tendency to depreciate specific doctrinal teaching. On the first of these subjects many works are published. Two may be selected—Rev. T. M. Herbert's "Realistic Assumptions of Modern Science examined" (Macmillan, 1880), and Rev. Professor Griffiths' "Faith the Life-root of Science, Philosophy, Ethics, and Religion" (Elliot Stock, 1882). On the latter subject, it is sufficient to remind the reader that Butler's great work, "The Analogy of Religion to the Course of Nature," has never been answered, and that he cannot do better than master the second part, "On Revealed Religion," reading with it some of the chapters of Paley's "Evidences" bearing on the same subject, chapters i. and viii. We would recommend Newman's "Grammar of Assent" as a work helpful in showing the necessity of a direct revelation.

In conclusion, let the student bear in mind that, in a large amount of evidence, such as he will have to review, the *systematic arrangement* of his reading is of the utmost importance. Some of the larger works are sadly deficient in this respect, and give the reader unnecessary trouble. Paley's great work, full as it is of information, lacks system. But it is quite possible to supply this defect by orderly method in our studies.

Make some systematic work the foundation.

Clearly distinguish the different branches of the argument.

In selecting works to read, let them be as much as possible those which deal with *definite subjects.*

Keep the abstract apart from the historical.

Arrange details by means of principles.

Do not burden the memory with minute and unimportant matters, while the main subjects are unstudied.

Advance from the simple to the difficult. Then the sense of mastery will give confidence, and the consciousness of progress will encourage effort.

Whenever the mind is itself perplexed and troubled with doubt, endeavour to ascertain what the doubt is in its *relation to the whole line of argument.* Put it in its true place, and it will often vanish before a comprehensive survey of the line of evidence.

The cumulative effect of the systematic study of Christian evidence is so great, that isolated difficulties are lost in the general assurance of "*the certainty of those things in which we have been instructed.*"

We append to this text-book the following pages from the excellent little treatise of Rev. W. Benham, B.D., "How to Teach the Old Testament," because it furnishes a text for some lessons in the second year of the course of the Assembly Normal Union. For particulars concerning this course of study for Sunday-school teachers, address Rev. A. E. Dunning, No. 1 Somerset Street, Boston, Mass.; or, Rev. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D., No. 805 Broadway, New York.

HOW TO TEACH THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I.

THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY.

Let us first consider the Bible as the teacher of true historical principles. The teacher in other departments of his work has to do with history. The Bible offers him principles by which he can examine and judge of the history of nations and men. And, having so examined and judged, he will be able to convey the lessons he has learned even to minds of tender years.

History is the highest and noblest of all sciences. It is also one of the most difficult. Man lived history. It is a record of himself. "Each new fact in each man's life," says a profound thinker, "flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life reflect crises of nations."

It will hardly be necessary to tell my readers that history is not a mere collection of names and dates. It should enable us to see men themselves as they lived in the past, their thoughts, hopes, struggles, sorrows, joys. Then it becomes of all studies the most valuable, far higher than any other, for the purposes of moral instruction. We have already said that the heart is more easily moved by incident than by abstract propositions. In other sciences we learn facts and principles, in history we see men — we see life. Great deeds are done by beings like ourselves, and the heroes of the past leave to all who follow after them the legacy of their bright example. Without discussing at any length the various theories of history which have been put forth by philosophers, we may assert three propositions: —

1. History shows us how powerful nature has been to affect the welfare and destinies of man.

2. It shows us also how man has been able to control and modify the powers of nature.

3. And it shows how God, the Creator of all things, has laid His hand upon them both, and still controls them.

Take the first of these. We all know how climate, food, soil, affect man. To a great extent they cause the differences which characterize the inhabitants of the earth, differences of size, form, feature, of habits and customs, even of morals and religion. They prompt emigration, indicate the employments of the people, fix the localities of cities.

But this only accounts for a portion of what we see in the world. Man is not a mere creature of circumstances; he would not be man else, he would be no better than a tree or a stone. Let him be placed where he will, he at once asserts his lordship over nature by bidding it serve his ends. And this brings us to our third proposition. He who asserts His lordship over man by declaring that the earth is His and He made it, is God. As a wise German philosopher[1] writes: "Without the knowledge that there is a God regulating the course of human destiny by His all-ruling Providence, by His saving and redeeming power, the history of the world would be a labyrinth without an outlet — a confused pile of ages buried upon ages — a mighty tragedy without a right beginning or a right ending."

I believe that, the more the Bible is studied, the more what has been stated will be found its philosophy of history. It is expressed in the words, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Man placed in the earth to replenish that earth and subdue it, and God guiding him with the end always in view of restoring him to his original perfection in the world to come.

Let us see what is God's method of interpretation. The Bible gives no elaborate chronology or annals of the nations of the world. There are, it is true, occasional notices of the progress of other nations, but they are incidental to the one great purpose of God's progressive revelation of himself to fallen man. From the first we never lose sight of the Church in which He set up His witness of Himself, as a means to enlighten the whole

[1] Schlegel.

world. That Church was at first consecrated in a single family, gradually it widened into a nation. We see indeed continually God-fearing men outside that Church, proofs that His light was enlightening them also; but the visible tokens of his presence were with the chosen race until the fulness of the time was come. That chosen nation was God's instrument by which He proved His lordship over all the nations. Even as Christ raised Lazarus from the dead to prove Himself the Resurrection and the Life of the world, so God wrought miracles and signs in Israel as visible tokens that He guides all nations and is Lord of their destinies. It is written in the Psalm, "He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children" (Ps. lxxviii. 5). We — reading this in the light of the New Testament, remembering that *we* are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19) — we are able — nay, we are bound — to adopt the Psalmist's words to ourselves, and to say, "He made a covenant with England, and He gave England a law." And we look upon the history of France, or Germany, or Russia, and we find in the Old Testament how God would have us judge of such a history, that there is no kingdom or nation on earth which He sees not, and claims not as His own. Everywhere, as of old, He "loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity" (Ps. xlv. 7); "is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and by no means clearing the guilty" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7). The history of Israel gives the interpretation to all history, and a man reads the annals of that nation as given in the Old Testament to little purpose who does not see, by their help, the hand of God laid upon all nations.

II.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CONSIDERED AS A PREPARATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

§ 1. THE CHURCH OF THE PATRIARCHS.

I SHALL endeavor in the present chapter to give a detailed scheme of the history of the Church of God from the beginning, as the Bible brings it before us. The Biblical history of the Creation is the history of the beginning of the earth *considered as the abode of man.* Man is described to us in his original state, the state in which God was well pleased with him; then we have the fall and expulsion from Paradise (i.–iii.). The descendants of Cain developed a premature and corrupt civilization; the children of Seth called themselves by the name of the Lord (Gen. iv. 26, *margin*), *i. e.* they acknowledged the Lord as their God in contrast with the rest of the world. Here then we have *the Visible Church.*

This Church continues, but is corrupted by mingling with the world (v., vi. 1–8). God's judgment falls on it, but the Church is preserved in the family of Noah; he offers sacrifice on coming forth from the ark, and God renews His covenant with him.

Then we have notices of the rise of the great nations of the world (Gen. x.); and in the history of Babel we see an attempt at a godless unity, an attempt renewed in succeeding ages in the world's history, and each attempt in turn brought to confusion. The progress of the Church of God continues in the family of Shem, and the call of Abraham is the beginning of an organized polity, more full and definite than we have had before. But a sign that God's kingdom is not confined to one

family, but is wide as the world, is seen in Melchizedek, King of Salem (and therefore in all probability a Jebusite), and priest of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. xiv. 18–24).

In the solemn renewal of the covenant with Abraham, God's revelation is clearer than that to Noah. He opens to the Patriarch a vision of the future, as yet indeed but slight, yet fuller than has yet been made known (Gen. xv.).

Abraham's obedience to God's command to offer up Isaac was the culminating point of his faith and trust. It completed his self-surrender to God (Gen. xxii.). Compare with it Heb. xi. 17–19. On the death of his wife, his unfailing trust in the fulfilment of God's promise is seen in his refusal to mingle her dust with that of the people around. She shall be buried, and he with her, apart and alone. The blessing to the whole world shall come by the Church refusing to conform to the world.

The covenant with Abraham was renewed to Isaac, but his name does not come very prominently before us. In the days of Jacob and his sons we are brought into view of the ancient monarchy of Egypt. Of that monarchy, too, God reveals Himself the Lord and King, guiding it in His love and care, yet always keeping the Church distinct and apart from its idolatries. The Church and covenant are no longer confined to one man, as in the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for all Jacob's sons are recognized as the people of the Lord, and called by the distinctive name of Israel. In the contest between Moses as the representative of His people and Pharaoh the opposer and blasphemer of the Lord, we have a figure of the great battle between Light and Darkness which the history of the Church still presents.

In the wilderness we have the delivering of the written law, the establishment of a priesthood for the vicarious offering of sacrifice, and of a visible mercy-seat in a Tabernacle where God especially promised to be found of His people. The Tabernacle was carried about with the moving host in the wilderness, and on the settlement of the nation in Canaan was set up in Shiloh.

The period between the exodus and the entry into Canaan falls into four distinct periods : —

(*a*) The march to Sinai and encampment there (Ex. xv.–Num. x. 32).

(*b*) The advance toward Canaan (Num. x. 33–xiv.).

(*c*) The retreat and thirty-eight years' wandering (Num. xv.–xix.).

(*d*) The final advance to the Jordan (Num. xx., xxi.)

Of the period of the forty years' wandering we know almost nothing; there are a few episodes of deep interest, such as the rebellion of Korah (Num. xvi.) and the history of Balaam (Num. xxii.–xxiv., xxxi. 1–8). But we see that all these long years Moses was patiently organizing the people under the direction of God, so that whereas they were little better than a horde of savages when they left Egypt, they were marshalled and arranged in regular order when they drew near to the Jordan.

The conquest of Canaan is narrated in the Book of Joshua. The kings of the south were defeated at the battle of Makkedah, and of the north at the waters of Merom (ch. i.–xii.). Then the land was divided among the tribes (xiii.–xxii.); after which Joshua, having convened the tribes, solemnly charged them to remember that they held the land as tenants under God. Then he died in peace, with the promise from them that they would follow his exhortations.

In the period covered by the Book of Judges we see the nation in its early days often giving itself to violence and sin, but never losing the witness of God which had been committed to it. The tribes were sometimes at war, not merely with foreign enemies, but with one another. The war with Jabin marks the last attempt of the old inhabitants to repossess themselves of the country; after that time we hear little more of them. The last remnant, the Jebusites, were dispossessed of Jerusalem by David (2 Sam. v.)

As the country became more settled, there was an evident tendency to monarchy. Moses had anticipated and provided for this (Deut. xvii. 14–end). Abimelech's attempt, for a while successful, marks this tendency. But it failed partly through

the godless character of the man and his attempt, partly from its prematureness. But by the time the Book of Samuel opens unity was so far attained that Eli the priest was also judge of the whole people, and the same office was filled by Samuel.

§ 2. THE CHURCH UNDER THE MONARCHY.

The song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, is a song of the coming monarchy (1 Sam. ii. 1–10). It clearly regards that monarchy as on its way, and for the first time speaks of God as "the Lord of hosts." The First Book of Samuel is therefore sometimes called also truly "the First Book of the Kings." The orderly rule of Samuel and his rescue of the nation from ruin after the fall of Shiloh made the people more eager than ever for a king in order to preserve their unity. They sinned indeed in not referring the matter to God, in forgetting that He was the true Lord of the nation; but He announced that He would grant their wish, yet all the while would rule them himself. So the monarchy began, and with it began also the period of the prophets. Moses, as we know, had been a prophet; but with Samuel began a regular prophetic order, and we begin to read of "the sons of prophets" (1 Sam. x. 10, etc.). Thus we see the prophetic order was established side by side with the royal, and the student will find constantly that the prophet was the Divine check against tyranny and wrong on the part of the king.

The teacher must remember that now we begin to have two, and sometimes more, portions of the Bible running side by side. We have a continuous narrative in the Books of Samuel and Kings, and from the death of Saul we have also the Books of Chronicles. But also we have the Book of Psalms to illustrate the history of David. The teacher will find it always an interesting subject with his pupils, when reading the history of David, to illustrate continually from the Psalms.

A contrast to the great empires of antiquity, where a man built a strong city and then proceeded to tyrannize over and enslave his fellow-men around, was the history of Jerusalem. The people of Israel emerged from slavery to be a race of freemen. Their education was carried on in the wilderness, and

in the fields and Pastures of Palestine, until they became an orderly nation and kingdom. Then, and not until then, David took Jerusalem as the centre and citadel of that free kingdom, and set up the ark of God in the midst, the sign that God was the Ruler and King of the people. And then we have his desire to build a temple, not (it is true) granted to him, but recognized and blessed by God, who opens to him a vision of the greatness of the kingdom of David which shall be established forever (2 Sam. vii.).

§ 3. THE CHURCH OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM.

The teacher will find a very valuable table of the kings of the two kingdoms in the "Aids to Bible Students," p. 115. This table also contains notices of the contemporary history of the world. I add here to what the reader will find in that table the passages of Holy Scripture, where the histories of the respective kings will be found.

B. C.	B. C.
977. Rehoboam, 1 Kings xii. 1–24, xiv. 21–31; 2 Chron. x.–xii.	977. Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 20–xiv. 20.
959. Abijam, 1 Kings xv. 1–8; 2 Chron. xiii.	
956. Asa, 1 Kings xv. 8–24; 2 Chron. xiv.–xvi.	956. Nadab, 1 Kings xv. 25–31.
	954. Baasha, 1 Kings xv. 27–xvi. 7.
	932. Elah, 1 Kings xvi. 8–10.
	931. Zimri, 1 Kings xvi. 9–20.
	929. Omri, 1 Kings xvi. 21–28.
	918. Ahab, 1 Kings xvi. 29, xxii. 40.
916. Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xvii.–xx.; 1 Kings xxii. 41–49.	897. Ahaziah, 1 Kings xxii. 51–end; 2 Kings i.
	896. Jehoram, 2 Kings ii.–ix. 26.
892. Jehoram, 2 Chron. xxi.	
885. Ahaziah, 2 Chron. xxii. 1–10.	
884. Athaliah, 2 Kings xi.; 2 Chron. xxii. 10, xxiii. 1–15.	884. Jehu, 2 Kings ix., x.
878. Joash, 2 Kings xii.; 2 Chron. xxiv.	
	856. Jehoahaz, 2 Kings xiii. 1–9.
	839. Jehoash, 2 Kings xiii. 10–xiv. 16.
838. Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv. 1–20; 2 Chron. xxv.	

B. C.

809. Uzziah or Azariah, 2 Kings xv. 1–7; 2 Chron. xxvi.; Joel.

757. Jotham, 2 Kings xv. 32–38; 2 Chron. xxvii.; Micah.
742. Ahaz, 2 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii.; Isaiah vii., viii.
726. Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix.–xxxii.; Isaiah ix.–xxxix.
697. Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1–20.
642. Amon, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21–end.
640. Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv.; 2 Kings xxiii. 1–30; Habakkuk.
609. Jehoahaz, 2 Kings xxiii. 30–34; Jer. xxii. 11, 12.
609. Jehoiakim, 2 Kings xxiii. 34, xxiv. 1–6; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5–8.
598. Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxiv. 8–16; xxv. 27–30; Jer. xxii. 24–30.
597. Zedekiah, 2 Kings xxiv. 17–end, xxv. 1–21.

B. C.

823. Jeroboam, ii.; 2 Kings xiv. 23–29; Amos; Hosea. Interruption of ten years.
772. Zechariah, 2 Kings xv. 8–12.
771. Shallum, 2 Kings xv. 13–15.
771. Menahem, 2 Kings xv. 15–22.
760. Pekahiah, 2 Kings xv. 23–26.
758. Pekah, 2 Kings xv. 27–31.

730. Hoshea, 2 Kings xvii.

The teacher will observe at a glance that the kings of Judah are much more fully dealt with in the Chronicles than in the Kings, whilst the latter book gives us much fuller information than the former about the northern kingdom, — Israel. Closer examination will show why this is so; the Books of Kings may be called a political history, the Books of Chronicles an ecclesiastical, and speaking therefore much of the Temple at Jerusalem, which was within the kingdom of Judah. In a nation where the State and Church were so closely united and intertwined, it was indeed a matter of course that each book shall say much concerning both; still the Books of Chronicles, certainly written by one of the tribe of Levi, form the source from which we gain most information concerning the Temple worship and the priesthood during the days of the monarchy. The teacher, therefore, will be able to gather some very beautiful lessons concerning public worship and the ritual of Divine worship from these books.

As the Book of Psalms throws light on the life of David, so do the Books of the Prophets upon the history of the monarchy. In our blessed Lord's parable of "The Wicked Husbandmen," He shows how the prophets were sent to bring the erring nation to obedience to their king (Matt. xxi. 33–41).

There is one point which should not be passed over even in this short treatise. It is the fulness of the prophetic power which was brought to influence the northern kingdom. As if to compensate for the loss of the regular priesthood and Temple, God gave some of the greatest of the prophets to the kingdom of Israel. Elijah and Elisha were almost entirely ministers to that kingdom. We hear of no word of Elijah to Judah, if we except the posthumous letter referred to in 2 Chron. xxi. 12. Jonah had also a mission to the kingdom of Israel, though it is not detailed in Scripture (2 Kings xiv. 25).

§ 4. THE CHURCH IN THE TIME OF THE CAPTIVITY.

The direct historical narrative breaks off with the Book of Kings, and we have to piece it together by means of the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and of the Assyrian and Babylonian history.[1] The following slight table of the events of the seventy years' captivity and the return will, it is hoped, be a help to the teacher: —

606. Judah under Jehoiakim made tributary by Nebuchadnezzar. Many Jews, chiefly of the richer classes, carried to Babylon; among them Ezekiel, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael. (2 Kings xxiv. 1–4; Dan. i. These passages should also be read: Jer. xxvi., xxvii. 1–11; xxxv., xxxvi.)

598. Jehoiachin reigns three months. Jerusalem taken by the Chaldeans. Jehoiachin in exile. (Jer. xxii. 1–10.)

597. Zedekiah reigns as vassal of the Chaldeans for eleven years. (2 Kings xxiv. 17–20).

594. Ezekiel receives his call as prophet, by the river Chebar. (Ezekiel i.) The first twenty-four chapters of this prophet relate to the exiles in Babylon who were carried away at the first deportation. Then he has several chapters concerning foreign nations, xxv.–xxxii.

589. Zedekiah applies to Egypt for help, whereupon the Chaldeans immediately besiege Jerusalem again.

[1] There is a very good sketch of the history of the great empires in the *Aids*, pp. 96–109. — *The Bible and the Monuments.*

586. Jerusalem is destroyed, and the king taken prisoner. (2 Kings xxv.; 2 Chron. xxxvi.; Jer. lii.; Ezek. xxxiii. 21.) The greater part of the people carried away to Babylon. Jeremiah writes the *Lamentations*. Gedaliah is appointed governor by Nebuchadnezzar, but is killed by Ishmael. Many of the people flee into Egypt, and take Jeremiah with them. (2 Kings xxv. 22–26; Jer. xliii.)

581. Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple (Ezek. xl.–xlviii.)

580. Nebuchadnezzar sets up his golden image in the plain of Dura. (Dan. iii.)

570. Nebuchadnezzar's madness. (Dan. iv. 22, 27, 29, 33.)

564. His recovery.

562. His death. Accession of his son Evil-merodach. Jehoiachin taken out of prison. (2 Kings xxv. 27).

560. Evil-merodach slain; succeeded by Nergal-sharezer the Rab-Mag, *i. e.* chief of the Magi (see Jer. xxxix. 3, 13), called Neriglissar in Josephus. He married Nebuchadnezzar's daughter.

556. Nergal-sharezer succeeded by his son Laborosoarchod, a child, who is murdered within a year.

555. Nabonadius succeeds (called by Herodotus, Labynetus), He appears to have married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Having associated with himself Belshazzar as joint-king, he marched against Cyrus king of Persia, who was at war with Crœsus king of Lydia, leaving Belshazzar in charge of Babylon. Cyrus routed Nabonadius (who thereupon shut himself up in Borsippa) and marched against Babylon.

538. Belshazzar's impious feast, interrupted by God's awful message. Babylon taken by Cyrus, who committed the rule of the city to Darius the Mede. (Dan. v.)

538. Daniel cast into the lions' den. (Dan. vi.)

536. Death of Darius. Cyrus ruler at Babylon. His decree restoring the Jews, an answer to Daniel's prayer. (Dan. ix.)

§ 5. THE CHURCH FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

536. Return of the exiles from Jerusalem under Zerubbabel. (Ezra i.–iii.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23). The rebuilding of the Temple begins.

529. Cyrus dies, and is suceeeded by his son Cambyses, called in Ezra iv. 6 Ahasuerus (Persian and Sanskrit name for "king"). The adversaries of the Church try to stop the building of the Temple. (Ezra iv. 6.)

521. Death of Cambyses. Accession of a Magian impostor who pretended to be the younger son of Cyrus, Smerdis; called in Ezra iv. 7 Artaxerxes, *i. e.* "great warrior." The enemies repeat their attempt, and the Temple works are stopped.

521. The false Smerdis is slain, and succeeded by Darius Hystaspis. (Ezra iv. 24; v., vi.) Under him the Temple works are recommenced.

517. Temple completed. (Ezra vi.)

490. Darius invades Greece; but is defeated at the great battle of Marathon.

485. Xerxes, who succeeds his father Darius, is the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther. A great feast which he gives to his nobles leads to the deposition of Queen Vashti. He invades Greece, but is defeated at the battles of Salamis and Platæa. On his return Esther is made queen.

473. Haman's plot. Institution of the Feast of Purim.
464. Artaxerxes Longimanus succeeds his father Xerxes.
457. Ezra goes up from Babylon, under commission from Artaxerxes, with a large company of Jews. (Ezra vii., viii.) His reformation of religion and manners. (Ezra ix., x.)
444. Nehemiah goes up to Jerusalem, sent by the same king, as Tirshatha, or "governor." He repairs the broken walls, notwithstanding the cowardice and sloth of the Jews and the spite of their enemies. (Neh. i.–vii.) Solemn assembly of the people, and high festival. The covenant renewed. (Neh. viii.–xii.) His reformation.
430. With the prophet Malachi the Old Testament Scriptures close.

§ 6. THE CHURCH FROM THE CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES UNTIL THE COMING OF CHRIST.

This division of the history of the ancient Church of God does not fall strictly within the history of the Old Testament. We gather it partly from the writings of Josephus, partly from the Apocrypha, partly from profane authors. All that can be done here is to name the principal epochs.

The Jews continued under the rule of Persia as long as that monarchy lasted. The Samaritans being refused communion with them, Manasseh built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, B. C. 409.

In B. C. 333, Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, conquered the Persian king Darius, and the Persian monarchy was at an end. This event was the means of spreading the Greek literature and language all through the East, and thus a great help was prepared for the spread of the Gospel. He founded the city of Alexandria, and under his sanction great multitudes of Jews took up their abode there. In after years, when many of them had forgotten their native tongue, the Old Testament was translated into Greek for their use; this is the translation called the *Septuagint*. When Alexander died, in 323, his conquests were divided between four generals. Palestine lay between the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, and became a battle-field of these rival kingdoms, being seized again and again, first by one power, then by the other.

The tyranny and cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes, who became king of Syria B. C. 175, led to the rising of the Jews under the brave Maccabees, and Palestine again became independent

B. C. 141, about the time when Rome, by the destruction of her rival, Carthage, and the conquest of Corinth, was consolidating her colossal power round the Mediterranean Sea. Thus began, at Jerusalem, the dynasty of the Asmonæans. It lasted till B. C. 70, in which year a dispute between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the great-grandsons of Simon the brother of Judas Maccabæus, led them to appeal to the Roman general Pompey, who had been achieving great victories in the East. He came and made Judæa subject to the Roman power. Then came the civil wars of Rome, and at the battle of Philippi, B. C. 41, the Republic was overthrown, and the Empire took its place under Augustus Cæsar. Two years before, Herod, an Edomite, had succeeded in persuading the Romans to make him king of Judæa. During his reign, and under the Empire of Augustus, our Blessed Saviour was born.

III.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CONSIDERED AS THE PREPARATION FOR CHRIST.

I HAVE spoken of the Bible as the interpreter of history; I turn now to a subject never to be lost sight of by the teacher. We are told (to quote the Revised Version) in Heb. i. 1 that God spake of old "unto the fathers in the prophets, by divers portions and in divers manners." Always, as the New Testament teaches us, the eternal purpose of God was before Him in the revelation of the Old Testament, of gathering together all things in Christ. The revelation was "by divers portions," it was not all given at once. The light became clearer as the world moved on. Of the "divers manners," too, we shall see as we read. But though the revelation was progressive, there is enough to show us the unchanging character of God's purpose from the beginning.

1. **Sacrifice.** — Let us start with these words from Rev. xiii. 8, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Before Adam sinned, the Lamb had been slain in the eternal counsels of God. It was no afterthought following that sin; it was an essential part of the very nature and character of God. Here we stand to-day between two eternities. We look back upon the past, and that is all mystery: the eternal existence of God, the mutual love of the Father and the Son. We look into the future, and see ourselves in the great eternity, and all is solemn mystery there. And between them the unspeakable Love has placed us to adore and believe; to believe that there is and has ever been, by some divine necessity beyond our comprehension, a combination of sacrifice and power. This serves to explain the fact that wherever we meet with any sort of religion in the wide world, there is sure to be sacrifice in some form. The miserable and ghastly form which it takes

among the African tribes, who slay their fellow-creatures before their idols, is a caricature proving that there must have been a true form of sacrifice at first which came down from heaven. The false forms are found in the heathen religions; the true in Holy Scripture.

2. **Abel's Sacrifice.** — The first direct mention of sacrifice is that of the sons of Adam (Gen. iv.) Cain's offering was rejected; Abel's was accepted. Whether the difference lay in the characters of the two men, or in the nature of their offering, we are not told; but as one reads the rest of the Bible it seems almost clear that it was, in part at least, the second of the two. The brothers stood in a world which had been polluted by sin, but which had also received a covenant of deliverance. *We* know that this covenant rested on the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, though not yet revealed to the world. Their lives, like the life of every man born into the world, lay in the redemption by Christ. This was the law of their existence, and therefore must be the basis of their worship. The sacrifice of Abel's lamb was an expression of this; the offering of fruits was not. The one, but not the other, imaged the Divine Sufferer. From the first the lamb was the standing symbol and type of the Redeemer.

There is much that is fearful about the history of the Fall, — God's righteous anger — man driven from Eden — a threatening glare upon his path from the flaming sword behind him. But a figure comes between. The shadow of the slain Lamb falls along the lengthening way; and in that shadow man crosses the wilderness of this world to a nobler Eden than he leaves.

3. **Extension of the Law of Sacrifice.** — The teacher studying the records of God's revelation of Himself will not fail to note how, whenever He renewed, or extended, or enlarged His covenant with the patriarchs, there was always some extension of the law of sacrifice. Thus, after the Flood, when He renewed His covenant with Noah, we are told that Noah offered of every clean beast and of every clean fowl. So when God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, there was a special solemn sacrifice (Gen. xv.).

4. **The Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac.**— The great chapter which relates to the sacrifice of Isaac stands midway in the world's history between the sacrifice of Abel and those appointed under Moses— midway in meaning, midway in time. For the sacrifice of Abel expressed the ground of man's hope, the slain Lamb; but did not *explain*. Abel brought the firstling of his flock, and was accepted for his obedience and trust; and that was all. But in the case of Abraham and his son we have the very image of the great Offering to come.[1] The well-beloved son, the representative of the whole race, is voluntarily offered by the father, — voluntarily offers himself. "They went both of them together," as we are told twice (verses 6 and 8); one in purpose, one in mind. The father binds the son; the son unresistingly suffers himself to be bound. The type is complete. No type afterwards added anything to the fulness of this sublime prophecy-in-action. The sacrifices of Moses taught the people more concerning the *benefits* of sacrifice, gave fuller information on details; but the truth itself that the Lamb was slain from all eternity was never more fully foreshadowed and exemplified than in the sacrifice of Isaac.

We may, I believe, put it this way. In Isaac, Abraham saw the day of Christ (John viii. 56). Moses showed how the sacrifice of Christ would be applied. Just as in the New Testament the Gospels tell us how Christ died, and the Epistles tell how the sacrifice is applied to the heart and the conscience; each has its work, and one completes the other.

Space would fail me in trying to bring before the teacher all the points of this Divine history; I can only just indicate some. (1) Abraham learned that his sacrifice would of itself not avail; it would not have satisfied his craving to serve God. He learned that all human sacrifice could be only typical. *Man* could provide no fitting offering, and therefore the Lord provided. (2) Isaac looked round for a victim. There was none (Cf. Isa. lxiii. 5). (3) They went together and alone; the servants could not enter. No mortal can enter into the secret work of the Father and the Son (Cf. John xvi. 32; Isa.

[1] The chapter is one of the Proper Lessons for Good Friday.

lxiii. 3). (4) Compare Gen. xxii. 6 with John xx 17. (5) Read the commentary supplied by Heb. xi. 17–19.

5. **The Paschal Lamb.** — The sacred history plainly indicates all through the Book of Genesis that it is moving steadily to a "far-off great event." The whole tenor of the promises bade the receivers look forward. The captivity in Egypt marks an epoch in the history of the Church. It was not only a type of the battle of the Church with sin, but it was a preparation of the family to become a nation. When the time came for the development of this nation by their leaving the land of bondage, the great sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb was ordained. That was not only a sacrifice, it was also a feast; not only a type of the offering of Christ, but the beginning of a new state of things. The lamb, after being slain, was eaten. No part was burnt on an altar. Only that which the worshippers could not eat was to be burnt with fire. The animal was to be dressed whole, not even a bone was to be broken. There is (if one may say so) a lavish abundance of emphasis in the way that all this is laid down, all indicating a truth so precious that words are too weak to express it, viz., that in His Covenant of Redemption God gives us in Christ His best, and gives it all. He keeps nothing back, and it is all for us. It is not merely a propitiation for guilt, it is an eternal life and joy. Our redeemed human nature partakes of the whole nature of an Incarnate God.

And when we read the discourses of our Lord in St. John xiii.–xvi., with these ideas in mind, the history of the Passover throws light upon them which was not there before. Those discourses are the Divine interpretation of the central act of the Old Testament, out of which arose the central act of the New. The Passover of the Christian Church was the death and the rising again of the ancient rite. The typical Passover vanished; but the Christian Eucharist arose at the same instant, and its forms still gave forth the same lesson which the forms of the elder rite had taught, but spiritualized and glorified like Ezekiel's temple.

The sacrifice was all for the benefit of those who were taught to offer it. The Body and Blood are given for us.

"Take this and divide it among yourselves," Christ says of the blood which is the life.

But, above all, let us again recur to the great fact that this last Passover shows so clearly that the doctrine of Communion was a main constituent in the teaching of the Paschal feast. We have seen already how sacrifice and covenant go together, how all through God's teachings it was shown that human life is *redeemed* life. Traced upwards to its final source we see this redeemed life issuing from the throne of God, from the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; springing from that sacrifice at first and depending upon it still. We have no existence apart from it. Who does not see this through all the discourses on the Passover night? "I am the True Vine." "Except ye abide in Me ye are nothing." Whatsoever of divine and supernatural power is expressed by the words, "This is My Blood of the New Testament" *must* be circulating evermore through our redeemed existence. For the whole Church, and for each member of the Church, it is the same — the Sacrifice, and the Communion upon the sacrifice, not one without the other; the sacrifice and the feast make one Passover solemnity. The one without the other is nothing at all, in the two together we have the Gospel. The Jewish Passover and the Christian Eucharist brought all hidden lights into view. The Jewish and the Christian rites joined hands under the shadow of the Cross, both bearing witness to Him of whom each testified. The one vanished away in the very hands of Him who ordained it, but did not vanish without seeing Him hand it on in fairer colors to its newly-found sister. And therefore, when we read in the Old Testament of the great Jewish Passover, we add in our minds with thanksgiving the apostle's joyous comment, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast."

6. **The Scapegoat.** — The Paschal Lamb was the greatest type of the Old Covenant. Second to it came that of Scapegoat, of which a full account will be found in Lev. xvi. Once more let us note at the outset that the ordinances delivered by Moses were not a bundle of forms without coherence; there was a great unity in all that complicated arrangement of cere-

monies, and that unity was the Divine Sacrifice. The Lamb slain from eternity meets us at every turn. The prism is many-sided, but the light is one.

What was the further truth conveyed by the scapegoat?

The Passover lamb was the bond of the covenant, the sign of union with God. But the people were continually breaking the covenant. Every act of sin broke it. The scapegoat explains how the breach was to be healed.

On the great *Day of Atonement* (10th Tisri) two goats were chosen, as near as could be of the same size and appearance; one was to be for the Lord, the other for *the scapegoat.* The Hebrew word so rendered is so unusual that the translators felt doubtful of the meaning, and therefore left it in the margin, as will be seen in reference Bibles — "Azazel." It is now agreed by Hebrew scholars that the word "Azazel" means "for the complete sending away."

The first goat was to be slain and burnt as a sin-offering, and the full details of the offering are of deep and solemn interest. The Epistle to the Hebrews, it will be remembered, interprets the high priest's entry into the holiest place with the blood of the slain goat, to be a type of the entry of Christ into the highest heaven with His own blood of Atonement (Heb. ix.). So far all is clear. But the parallel to the work of Christ would not be completed by the death of the slain goat, because Christ not only died but rose again. To prefigure this, the other goat "for Azazel," was brought out alive after the other had been slain, the sins of the people were solemnly laid upon it "for the complete sending away," and the goat went away into a land not inhabited. Even so the resurrection of Christ was for our justification, for the complete putting away of sin.

The scapegoat, then, sets forth that under the covenant of redemption, and through the power of sacrifice, the actual sins of men, confessed and repented of, are not allowed to stand between the sinner and God, they are removed completely. Such an institution was necessary because, though men are in covenant with God, they are continually breaking it, till even the covenant itself seems a failure. The scapegoat bears witness in a beautiful figure that the One Sacrifice is continually avail-

ing to remove the barriers which sin is always building up in spite of man's redeemed condition. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," and the teaching of the scapegoat is *Repentance* and *Restoration.*

7. **The Serpent lifted up.** — There is one other Old Testament type of which I must speak at some length, different from the foregoing. Those that we have had have been ordinances in continual and regular order, a witness, year after year, of Him that was to come. But there were also types arising out of accidental circumstances, produced out of those circumstances, and then disappearing altogether. Two such stand above all others, *the manna* and *the lifting up of the serpent,* both in the wilderness. Of each of these our Lord declared that they were types of Himself (John iii. 14, 15; vi. 32–58). Now, in each case, we have the same principle stated, namely, that from Christ himself proceed the spiritual energies of the regenerate life of those whom He has redeemed. In the one case the leading idea is that of continual support, in the other that of remedy. The manna represents Christ as the spiritual sustenance, renewing the strength of His fainting, struggling people. The uplifted serpent shows us Christ crucified as the spiritual medicine which renews their health. Food and sustenance are not enough. The life and health of the regenerate soul are weakened not only by the natural outgoings of strength which follow all the activities of created life. There are sicknesses of the soul, and wounds which accompany every state of strife and warfare. For the plague and wounds of sin remedies are needed. The circumstances which led to the lifting up of the serpent are familiar to us all. They are recorded in Num. xxi. The people, worn out with long journeying, lost heart, and, from want of trust in Him who had done so much for them, went on to despise the food which He had given them. So it is still. When we forget what God has done for us already, we go on to disbelieve that He is doing anything for us at all. We see no grace in the sacraments, no spiritual energies at work for our guidance. And so we become exposed to the danger of dark unbelief, the true fiery serpent. From the beginning of the Bible to the very end, the serpent

is the symbol of the devil, the deceiver and false accuser. The devil is first the false accuser of God. He puts false notions and thoughts of God into our minds, and blinds us to the perception of the actual gifts and graces which are ours from Christ. And so as Israel sinned after the manner of the serpent's temptation, they suffered by the serpent's bite. They charged God with not caring for them, and they had bitterly to learn what would become of them if God did not care for them, if He left them alone. The deadly wound of the serpent's bite paralyzes all spiritual life. And unbelief in our own spiritual privileges destroys all power of action. Then came God's remedy, the most vivid type of Christ's salvation which the history of the wilderness contains. "Not to condemn the world but to save," was His expression of the object of His mission (John iii. 17). The uplifted serpent was the *Restoration of Trust.* For it represented the power of God to slay the serpent, to destroy his work, to destroy the severance which unbelief had made between God and man by his false accusation. Nay more, it represented that God the Redeemer was already victor over the accuser, was present to heal all who, from whatever cause, had come under the cruel power of the vanquished enemy. The people looked up at the image of sin fastened to the tree, and their trust was restored, and they lived again.

Christ has nailed to His cross all fears and suspicions of God which coward conscience has begotten. And this is the first type in Scripture which sets forth the *manner* of the Sacrifice to which we turn our eyes and live.

The question may still arise, How can the serpent, of all things, be a type of Christ? We can see that the uplifting of the serpent represents the crucifixion, but how can the symbol of the devil be a type of the Saviour? We reply, this type is intended to reveal to us as much as we are able to understand of the manner in which the sacrifice of Christ heals the diseases of our souls. It sets forth the actual doing away of sin which his atonement accomplishes. He who knew no sin "was made sin for us." He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, just as that

which Moses lifted up was made in the likeness of the destroying serpent. So when the Sinless was crucified, sin was slain, Satan was vanquished, the serpent's head bruised. The sight of the crucified gives us power to put away our mistrust and doubt and despondency. Christ the Conqueror is Christ the Healer.

8. **Other Types.** — I have thought it well to treat a few of the great types at length as examples for the teacher. I can only *name* some of the others, leaving him to work them out for himself. Some belong, like most of those we have been considering, to the organized system of Old Testament ordinances. Some arise out of particular circumstances. I do not think I can do better than transcribe the Table of Contents of a charming little book, published by the National Society for sixpence, entitled "The Types and their Antitypes," by Lady Mary Herbert. It will be found full of suggestions to the teacher. Perhaps it will be well, however, to say a word of caution here against being too fanciful and making comparisons out of mere accidents. In the case of the types we have named, we have divine sanction for them. So we have for some of those named in this list; *e. g.* as regards Eliakim compare Isaiah xxii. 22 with Rev. iii. 7. But clearly, if the teacher speaks of Samson as a type of Christ he should point out also the contrast as well as the difference. In both cases there was the love of the people, the might, and self-sacrifice. But the wilfulness and self-indulgence of the one marred a great work; the perfect holiness of the other completed His work.

PART I.

HOLY MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT — TYPES OF CHRIST.

Abel	Joshua	Cyrus
Melchizedek	Samson	Eliakim
Isaac	David	Jonah
Joseph	Solomon	Zerubbabel
Moses; his life	Elijah	Joshua, son of
" his office	Job	Josedech

PART II.

THE TYPICAL EVENTS OF THE BIBLE.

The Flood	The Taking of Jericho
The Burning Bush	The Scarlet Thread
The Brazen Serpent	The Fall of Babylon
The Cities of Refuge	The Destruction of Jerusalem

PART III.

THE MOSAIC, A TYPE OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

The Temple
The Outer Court
The Altar of Burnt Offering
The Holy Place
The Most Holy Place
The Ark and the Mercy Seat
The Veil
The High Priest
The Sacrifices
The Feasts:
  i. Passover
  ii. First Fruits
  iii. Tabernacles
The Great Day of Atonement
The Ceremonies
The Year of Jubilee.
The Sabbath
The Holy City

PART IV.

THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

Types of Baptism.

Noah's Ark
The Red Sea
Circumcision
The Passage of Jordan
The Cleansing of Naaman

Types of Holy Communion.

The Tree of Life
The Bread and Wine of Melchizedek
The Wheat with which Joseph fed his Brethren
The Paschal Lamb
The Manna
The Springing Rock
The Shewbread
The Barrel of Meal and Cruse of Oil
The Bread which the Angel brought to Elijah

The journeying of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, typical of the Christian's life in the Church.

And I will quote one specimen from this book, the chapter on the "High Priest," as showing how interesting this subject may be made.

"THE HIGH PRIEST.

"The High Priest was the type of Christ, our Great High Priest. Heb. iv. 14.

"1. He was anointed to the Priesthood: Christ is the anointed one. Ex. xxix. 7; Acts iv. 27.

"2. The Priesthood was to continue in the family of Aaron, and his alone: Jesus Christ is an eternal High Priest. Ex. xl. 15; Heb. vii. 25.

"3. The High Priest entered the Most Holy Place within

the veil: our High Priest Christ Jesus is gone up into Heaven. Lev. xvi. 12; Heb. viii. 1.

"4. The High Priest only entered into the Holiest once a year: Christ having *once* made atonement for us entered into Heaven. Ex. xxviii. 35; Heb. ix. 7, 11, 12.

"5. The High Priest made atonement for the people: Christ for us. Lev. xvi. 30; Heb. ix. 13, 14."

Here is one other passage from another work, somewhat more full and elaborate, "The Figures and Types of the Old Testament," by the Rev. J. R. West (Masters): —

"THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD AND OF FIRE.

"Although as soon as the Israelites had been baptized, God led them into the wilderness of temptation, yet he provided everything needful for their difficult journey.

"First, He gave them the Pillar of the Cloud and of Fire (Ex. xiii. 21). This was an unerring *guide* which would lead them day by day, and night by night, till they should arrive at the Promised Land. It was also their *guard* for protection, as when the Egyptians were pursuing them. It was their *covering* or *shade* in the daytime, so that the sun could not smite them; and it was their light in the night season. For in it was the abiding presence of the Lord Himself.

"And all this is a type of the abiding presence of the Lord with His Church now. For the cloud is one of the emblems of the Holy Spirit, and fire ever denotes divinity. And the pillar of fire was also the overshadowing cloud.

"The Lord the Holy Ghost is now come down to guide, and to guard, and comfort, and enlighten us, as we travel through the wilderness of this world. And in His abiding presence is the presence also of our Redeemer and Saviour.

"His holy guidance and godly motions if we humbly follow, He will guide and lead us safely, till we reach His holy habitation in the true felicity of the everlasting Canaan. Then we shall sing a new song of praise with more understanding to Him *who has led His people through the wilderness, for His mercy endureth forever.*

"But compare Ex. xxiii. 20, 21, with Eph. iv. 30, and Acts vii. 51."

But the types are by no means the only method by which God foretold Christ under the Old Testament. In the fullest sense the whole of the Old Testament was prophetic. The chosen people were always bidden to look forward to "Him that should come," not only in the set prophecies, but in God's manifold dealings.

9. **The Jewish Monarchy** is one instance. The setting up of the monarchy would lose its significance if we forgot that it was a leading up to the Kingdom of Christ. The promised day of the house of David never could have come unless we take the greater kingdom into account. Such was St. Peter's argument in Acts ii. 30. So in St. Paul's first recorded sermon notice the force with which he dwells on "the *sure mercies* of David" (Acts xiii. 34). When God gave David the kingdom, He promised to befriend Solomon, and He said, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son" (2 Sam. vii. 14). It is clear that the words refer to Solomon, that the visible king was under the care of the Invisible. But we feel this must have meant more than that Solomon should reign for awhile and die. It asserted that there was an actual relationship between God and the Jewish king and nation. They did not understand *how* this could be, but there was the promise. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows that such a promise could only be fulfilled in Christ, who was the flower and perfection of the Kingdom of David, and he therefore quotes these words and declares that they refer to Christ (Heb. i. 5). The same truth meets us all through the history of the monarchy. It would have been a beginning without an end if the outward had not been throughout the sign of the coming on of the Divine and Invisible. And this is the key to Old Testament prophecy; not a fast-and-loose way of making words mean anything, but the strict interpretation of God's whole system with His people.

We trace a progress in the Divine Revelation as we pass through the Old Testament. First, God taught His chosen ones

to believe in His Unity. It was one of the truths laid hold of by Abraham, who believed also in God's *righteousness, faithfulness, providence.* It was the necessary foundation for all which followed. He taught some, too, outside the chosen people, Melchizedek and Job for example. He gave fuller revelations to Moses than to Abraham, and delivered, through him, a written *Law.* "Moses stands in history the Father of Legislation." And a progress in knowledge is manifested in the commentary upon Exodus found in the Book of Deuteronomy. In him, too, we see the rise of the *Prophetic* order, and he is the first of *historians.* The prophetic gift grew unto the days of Samuel, the reformer and the statesman, who "gathered round him at Naioth, where his own house was situated, a number of young men whom he trained in reading, writing, and music." In David, the *Psalmist*, we see a further progress. His contributions to sacred literature were the means of conveying fresh light concerning the promised Saviour, as in Ps. xl. 6–8, a distinct foreshadowing of the Incarnation. But further, the Psalms of David mark an advance in spirituality; there is a greater fulness and depth than in any writings before. "It is very important," it has been well said, "that the Psalms should be studied from an historical point of view, *i. e.* not as ideal patterns of devotion revealed from heaven, irrespective of times and circumstances, but as actual utterances of individual piety under a dispensation of religion which, in the order of time, was intended to prepare for the higher teachings of Christianity. . . . If they be regarded as voices floating in the air, after coming down from heaven, and not as expressions of thoughts and feelings gushing up from the depths of human souls, agitated by conflict, their nature and their meaning are misapprehended." Who does not see the wondrous moral force in the Psalms of David working its way upwards to what is perfect! For example, in the fifty-first Psalm, where the most appalling instance of backsliding which the Old Testament contains gives origin to the most touching of all songs of repentance? The *plaintive* songs, never, even in the deepest distress, without hope, the songs of *grateful adoration*, the *intercessory* (xx., cxxxii., cxliv.), the *didactic* (xxxiv.), not to speak now of the

Prophetic, are all marvellous in the spiritual insight with which God has endowed the writer.

10. **The Prophets.** — Passing over the writings of the philosopher, Solomon, who began his teachings with inculcating that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. i. 7), we come to the Prophets. The teacher will find the trouble he will take in analyzing them amply rewarded by the fresh streams of knowledge that he will open. Fresh revelations are made here also; the clearer vision of the perfect *Kingdom* grows with the prophets, experience of the weakness and failure of the earthly kings, one after another. But above all, as Isaiah sees in vision his nation captive and cast out for its sin, he sees too, with a light and a glory such as had never been vouchsafed to man before, that the Deliverer too must enter with boundless sympathy into the misery of the outcasts, must be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. liii.).

And never do the prophets lose sight of the comforting but awful and solemnizing truth that God is a Being with whom men have to do every hour, who created, preserves, rules over them. Faith in Him is an absolute necessity; there is no comfort or help to be gained by mere speculations about Him, nor by poetical imaginations. No poetry can be of use except it be altogether true. The whole Old Testament is full of the truth that the Lord is King, that His eyelids try the children of men. There is always *growth* — the past is never obliterated, but it is continually reproduced and augmented. The progress is full of memories, but fuller of hopes; tells the meaning of past history, but tells too of better days to come, higher truth, purer righteousness. And the last chapter of all sees in the future John the Baptist, the last of the Prophets, the witness of the Incarnate Lamb of God, and closes with words which seem to gather up all the past books into a few burning words: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart

of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

So the Old Testament ends. It was our schoolmaster, or tutor, to bring us to Christ; and, while pointing forward to deliverance, puts prominently forward God's hatred of sin. The last words, therefore, are characteristic words. There is surely a touching and beautiful significance in the fact (noted by Bengel) that when Christ, the Mediator of the New Testament, opened his mouth to proclaim the law of His Kingdom. He opened with the word "*Blessed*" (Matt. v. 3)

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